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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

ONE of the best suggestions made in the Parliamentary debate on Wednesday was that the House of Commons should hold a secret session in which Ministers, responsible for Service Departments and even more for Supply, could speak their mind with a frankness that is impossible if the debate is being published to the world. This method was used on several critical occasions during the last war and Mr. Lloyd George has stated that nothing secret was ever divulged. Obviously, the Government's policy can only be usefully criticised if essential facts are known. Everything turns to-day on the nature of the German-Russian agreement; is there really reason to believe that Russia is prepared for full economic co-operation with Germany, with the prospect of German aid in reorganising Russian industry? If so, the implications are serious. But there is the alternative possibility that the U.S.S.R. is deliberately blocking Germany from Rumania and intends to play the chief role in a Balkan coalition. What is the position of several vital neutral Powers? Clearly, British policy must depend on the answer to such questions. All we know at present is that the great Powers still hold their hands when it comes to bombing any Power which can effectively retaliate, that Poland has been ruthlessly wiped out by Germany, while its eastern territory has been occupied by Russia, that Hitler's speech strikes the world as being cruel, boastful but uncertain, and that France and Britain have declared their intention of fighting on till their objectives, which are not yet clearly defined, are fulfilled.

Operations of War

The intervention of the U.S.S.R. precipitated the collapse of systematic Polish resistance against Germany, but it did not radically alter the course of the campaign on the Eastern front. By last Sunday it was clear that the German advance across the San, accompanied by a rapid out-flanking movement from the north towards Brest Litovsk, had fatally compromised the Polish army's ability to hold the line of the Vistula; and, with the "pincers" closing round Warsaw, it is difficult to see how any considerable part of Marshal Smigly-Ridz's forces could have been extricated. As it is, the Polish divisions trapped in the loop west of Warsaw have been fighting heroically, and the capital has been stoutly defended; but, though guerrilla warfare may continue for a time, the disintegration of the Polish army, as such, can now be only a matter of days. The moral of the campaign, from a military point of view, is that—in the absence of prepared positions—no infantry (still less cavalry) can stand long against mechanised divisions

preceded by bombers protected from counter-attack by overwhelming general superiority in the air. As for future developments on the Eastern front, speculation is naturally directed chiefly to the field of politics. In terms of strategy, however, it may be noted that, with the Red Army in possession of the Lvov-Cernauti railway, German troops could not enter Rumania without violating Hungarian territory.

The Western Theatre

There is little change to record in the situation between the Maginot Line and the Westwall. The French are sufficiently near Saarbrücken to have virtually paralysed production in an important German industrial area. General Gamelin is evidently content for the moment with this tactical advantage; German counter-attacks have not been made in strength, and there are technical reasons (not beyond the divination of students of modern war) why both sides in the West should not yet have undertaken any major operation. The transfer of German divisions from the East is bound to occupy some weeks; but there are reports of concentrations on the Belgian frontier. If Hitler decides on lightning war in the West, the possibility of an invasion of Belgium and Holland, in order to turn the Maginot Line, is not excluded. At sea, the British Navy has suffered a regrettable loss in the sinking of H.M.S. *Courageous*, and further considerable destruction of merchant tonnage by enemy submarines has been reported. On the other hand, it might be quite erroneous to conclude that British and French successes against U-boats have been confined to the relatively modest toll of sinkings so far announced. Mr. Chamberlain on Wednesday said six had been sunk; but the Admiralty is fond of meiosis.

The Czech Struggle

The resistance of the Czechs and Slovaks against their Nazi oppressors has been dealt with swiftly and savagely—and there are, no doubt, more reprisals and repression to come, for the struggle still goes on, as we write. The movement was not altogether a surprise. For some little time past the Germans had been taking measures to counter sabotage in the "Protectorate"—and these measures included threats not merely against individuals but against the whole Czech people. Five thousand prominent persons—2,000 in Prague alone, it is said—were recently arrested as hostages, and consigned to prison or concentration camps. Among these were numbers of officers of the former Czech army. In the Slovak army, too, open mutiny had broken out, and differences between Slovak and German troops sometimes led to shooting and the Slovak War Minister was compelled to go to Berlin to make formal apologies. Later the Germans were forced to withdraw Slovak troops who had been incorporated in the German army. The full story of the present incipient revolt cannot, of course, yet be told, nor its consequences predicted. But it is an ominous sign not only of what Hitlerism means, but of what the Germans are likely to be faced with presently on a larger scale from their conquered peoples.

The Position of Turkey

What will be the reactions at Ankara to the Russian move in Poland? Turkey's position is obviously delicate. She has concluded preliminary agreements with Britain and France covering the case of aggression in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The translation of these agreements into formal pacts of mutual assistance awaits the final settlement of the details of the complementary protocols dealing with financial credits, trade, and the supply of machinery which Turkey needs. In view of the loss, actual or prospective, of the German market for her exports, Turkey may reasonably insist on greater economic support from the Allies than she could have expected to secure before the outbreak of war in Europe. Certainly Britain and France cannot afford to be illiberal. But there is a further complication. Though there is no reason to suspect the Turkish Government of any desire to withdraw from its engagements to the Western democracies, friendship with the U.S.S.R. has been and probably remains the cardinal point in Turkey's foreign policy. If the U.S.S.R. were to depart decisively from neutrality *vis-à-vis* Britain and France, or were to take action against a neutral State covered by British or French explicit guarantees, Turkey might be torn between two loyalties. It is presumably to seek reassurances in these respects that the Turkish Foreign Minister has gone to Moscow.

Moves in the Far East

The Soviet-Japanese armistice in Mongolia is not, so the Japanese protest, to be regarded as the prelude to a full-blown pact. But there seems little doubt that the negotiations, which have been going on apace this week, will result in an understanding that will ease the mutual anxieties of the two Powers, and will increase those of China. Japan will be put in a stronger bargaining position and will be greatly encouraged to press on with a bigger drive against the Chinese. The Chinese are reacting courageously to this threat. Chiang Kai-shek, addressing the People's National Council a day or two ago, spoke confidently of China's military strength, and promised the most resolute resistance to Japanese aggression, even though her hopes of support from the West may be disappointed. As to that, it is still uncertain what the United States may do—and still more what Great Britain may, or can, do. Hopes or fears have been expressed that the Germans may persuade the Russians to disinterest themselves completely in the fate of China; but it does not look at the moment as if Stalin is going to be putty in Hitler's hands. German diplomacy is, of course, busy behind the scenes. The Nazis are making strenuous efforts to reinstate themselves in Japan's affections, but the Tokio Government is coy and cautious. On the other hand, it is significant that General Terauchi with his military mission, which has been visiting Italy, has gone to Berlin to see Ribbentrop, and has been talking to the Führer himself as well.

Prices, Rations and Insurance

Among the spate of orders and regulations issuing daily from the various wartime "controls" there are a number regulating the prices of various commodities at different stages of production and marketing. In general, the principle behind these orders appears for the present to be that of a "price standstill," by the fixing of maximum prices based on those actually current immediately before

the orders were made. In some cases, but not in all, retail as well as wholesale prices are controlled; and in one case at any rate—that of fish—it was simply laid down that "no person shall in connection with the sale or proposed sale by retail of fish make or demand any unreasonable charge." (The fish scheme is rescinded, but there are to be maximum prices.) Most of the orders issued are described as "provisional"; and there is still no clear indication of the Government's long-term price policy or of the currency policy with which it is intimately bound up. The difficulty of guessing what the Government intends is aggravated by the extraordinary position created by the terms laid down for the compulsory insurance of stocks of all kinds. If these terms stand, traders will have to be allowed to increase prices in order to cover the very heavy costs involved—six per cent. per annum on stock values. But it seems likely that the compulsory insurance scheme will have to be given up in its present form, in face of the nearly unanimous protests of the traders. For the rest, the national register is to be compiled next week, and rationing, except for motorists, waits upon its completion. Petrol rationing, after a week's postponement, comes into force on September 23rd; and it is common knowledge that almost no extra allowances have been given to the private motorist. Profiteering is going on, to some extent, in the case of goods not covered by the "controls." On the part of the public there is a growing feeling that on the economic front there is inadeqate Ministerial drive, and that Departments and controls staffed by a mixture of rigid bureaucrats and business "dug-outs" are making a mess of things.

Employment and Dilution

It is not possible at present to gauge the effects of the war on employment. On the one hand, there is the additional demand for munition makers and for the fire-fighters, ambulance drivers, and all the other emergency workers who are at present standing ready with nothing to do but wait. On the other hand, there are extensive discharges by retail traders, industries which are short of materials or uncertain about their wartime prospects, and householders who have either shut up their houses or begun cutting expenses as an economy measure. Among "intellectual workers" unemployment clearly predominates; and there are long queues looking vainly for jobs in the various emergency Ministries—the staffing of which veers between mystery and scandal. The calling-up of men for the armed forces is also, of course, affecting the employment situation; and as further militiamen are called to the colours a shortage of young male workers is bound to appear. There is, however, so far no sign of any general shortage of labour; and even in the case of skilled workers in the engineering and kindred industries the shortage does not seem yet to be acute. Negotiations about "dilution" are now proceeding between the engineering and shipbuilding Trade Unions and the Government; and probably no great difficulty will arise in arranging general terms. But dilution, as the last war showed, is a matter in which the chief difficulty lies not in making rules but in applying them to particular cases. The value of any agreement come to nationally will depend on the adequacy of its provisions for handling differences as they arise in particular establishments.

Wages for Railwaymen—and Others

The result of this week's proceedings before the Railway Staff National Tribunal will be of exceptional interest. Now that the railways have been taken over by the State, the railway companies' resistance to the Trade Union claims must presumably be taken as representing the attitude of the Government—for the managements of the four main line railways have now been metamorphosed into the Railway Executive Committee. The National Union of Railwaymen, with the support of the Railway Clerks' Association, which has also a few minor claims of its own, is demanding a minimum wage of 50*s*., in place of the 45*s*. conceded by the companies just before the outbreak of war. The Locomotive Engineers and Firemen have their separate schedule of more ambitious claims, which, it will be remembered, they were preparing to enforce by strike action until war conditions led to a resumption of proceedings before the Tribunal. The likelihood of appreciable concessions to the Locomotive Engineers appears to be small; but the claim to a 50*s*. minimum stands on a different footing. The Tribunal was sympathetic to it when it was originally considered last February, and based its rejection only on the companies' financial difficulties. The financial question is now one between the railwaymen and the Government; and there appears to be a strong case for conceding, in this and in other parallel cases that will speedily arise, a tolerable minimum standard, even if wage-increases in general are to be resisted as long as prices can be kept approximately at the pre-war level. The Tribunal, which is not under orders from the Government, is in this matter in a position to give a salutary lead.

The Public Health

The twentieth Annual Report of the Ministry of Health, which has just been published, is an encouraging record so far as it goes. But, of course, it deals with a period of peace; its facts and figures are largely for the past year, and we cannot hope that its tale of progress will be maintained in the days to come. New low records are shown in the standardised death rate, the infant and maternal mortality rates, and the tuberculosis death rate. The medical and welfare and sanitary services were making a slow improvement. Slum clearance and the abatement of overcrowding were going on steadily, if not as fast as we should have liked; and the total of new houses built since the end of the last war had topped the four million mark. Among the satisfactory changes in local administration we note the continued appropriation of hospitals from poor law to public health purposes. In all 54 authorities have taken over 111 hospitals, and there are now 137 hospitals provided by local authorities under their public health powers. The least satisfactory advance is in the sphere of nutrition. Two chapters of the Report deal with the new "Civil Defence" plans—for medical, ambulance and hospital services and for evacuation. The latter has already been carried out, and readers will be able to compare the plans with the performance. The former, of which the outstanding feature is the provision of beds for 290,000 casualties, has still to be put to the test.

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BREST-LITOVSK REVENGED

RUSSIA'S occupation of the old Tsarist provinces of Poland had, at least in general terms, been pre-arranged when the German-Soviet agreement was made, though the extent and timing of it may have been changed by the dangerous speed of the German advance. Our complaint against the U.S.S.R. is not that it has taken over territory which would otherwise have fallen to Germany, but that it precipitated the war when it threw over all its past declarations of policy and came to an agreement with the Nazis. Many of us had foreseen that Russia would go into isolation and that there might well be a partition of Poland if Britain did not hasten the Anglo-Soviet Pact, when it was offered shortly after the seizure of Prague. But when Stalin decided that the Western democracies were not worth helping and that isolation was the safer path for the U.S.S.R., he was not under any compulsion to continue negotiations with Britain and to hold military conversations with the British and French Staffs even while he was negotiating behind their backs with Hitler. It is the method and timing of the German-Soviet Pact of which we have to complain, not the occupation of Poland, which may, indeed, from our own point of view and the world's be a considerable advantage. Nor will it all necessarily bode any good to Hitler if the U.S.S.R. dominates the Baltic States or even establishes a protectorate over the old disputed territory of Bessarabia.

One thing seems clear; Russia has done a remarkably good stroke of business for herself. The German and Russian forces met on equal terms at Brest-Litovsk, where Lenin accepted the most humiliating peace of modern times at the hands of the Germans. By taking over the Russian parts of Poland, Stalin repays an old score; it was over these areas that Pilsudski, encouraged and financed by the Allies, carried out in 1920 one of the least justifiable military campaigns in modern history. By making friends with Germany at a critical moment, Stalin gets a little more than his own back on the democratic Powers, which had cold-shouldered Russia persistently for twenty years; if, as he believes, the Western democracies have tried to persuade Hitler to attack the U.S.S.R., he has succeeded in turning the tables and driving Hitler against the democracies. At the same time he promises a period of peace to the Soviet Union and places Russia in the strongest position for diplomatic or military intervention, if Germany and the Western Powers fight a protracted war of exhaustion in the West. Russia is still free to check Germany if Stalin wishes—and he may yet do so. Certainly a cynical move, quite in the best tradition of past German and Russian diplomacy.

If Russia had announced her intention in time there might have been no war this autumn. With Hitler given a free hand as he was, the British Government was forced to stand by a pledge which without Russian help it could not make effective. A new situation has been created which calls emphatically for definition of the constructive peace aims of Britain and France. The original conception of the Peace Front, which was to prevent war by the collective resistance by pacifically minded Powers to aggression has disappeared. Britain and France now stand alone against Germany. It is all the more necessary that neutrals who are now watching uneasily the movements of Hitler's big battalions should be given convincing proof that the Western Allies have peace aims that offer a real chance for European reconstruction.

In this crisis, when we should have thought an elementary patriotism would have led to caution and quiet speaking, part of the British press throws all caution to the winds. The *Times*, which has for years lectured everyone else on the danger of ideological thinking, suddenly discovers in the Soviet action an excuse for launching a crusade on a neutral Power whose position is ambiguous and whose decisions may be of decisive importance. For years the *Times* has encouraged the Nazis to believe that English people were complacent about the policy of National Socialism; now, realising at length that British diplomacy has thrown Hitler into the arms of Stalin, it exploits all the resources of polished venom to inflame passion against the U.S.S.R. For the first time since the war began a *Times* leader is written *con amore*. More dangerous still, it sets to work to build up a myth of Poland, whose unhappy plight we all lament. Elementary common sense should lead to the most cautious statements about Poland, whose full restoration could only be accomplished by the defeat both of Nazi Germany and of Soviet Russia—a proposition which even the *Times* does not dare to espouse. We see in these articles in the *Times* a perfect example of the type of mind which has brought us to our present situation. It is the mind which created Versailles and which paid disreputable generals to invade Soviet Russia after the war; the mind which refused justice to democratic Germany and then truckled to Nazi Germany; the mind which sabotaged the League, made war inevitable, neglected every democratic cause which we could have aided during the last eight years and which has now landed Britain and France in a war which need never have happened.

Pivotal points on which the whole future turns are still obscure. How far does the agreement of Stalin and Hitler go? That the two methods of government have in some respects been approximating has been clear to competent observers since the purges of three years ago. That the two economic systems are in many ways complementary is also clear, even though the outlooks of the two Governments, the one aiming at racial and imperial conquest and the other preoccupied with reorganising and industrialising a vast autarkic area, have differed so greatly. We see that for the moment their political interests have come together. Whether this will develop into a lasting alliance is an open question; the answer may depend on our policy. It is difficult to believe that Stalin wishes for a strong and victorious Germany. Stalin probably prefers to balance the forces of Europe, and it would seem to be the path of wisdom for Britain to maintain and immediately to strengthen its diplomatic position in Moscow. All that we can be sure of is that irresponsible language like that used in the *Times* is highly dangerous; if this type of thinking and language were to prevail the likely result would be to cement the temporary and precarious friendship of Hitler and Stalin and present this country with the impossible proposition of a war against a solid totalitarian combination from Cologne to Vladivostok. The British Government, as Mr. Chamberlain's speech in the House shows, sees the matter less ideologically and more intelligently.

If the *Times* is foolish about Russia it is no less foolish about Poland, whose Versailles frontiers cannot be rebuilt. We should indeed remove altogether from our minds the conception of rebuilding the Europe of Versailles. It is neither possible nor desirable. The best hope we have is that the German people may not find the swift efficiency of their military victory in Poland a compensation for shortage of the necessities of life and that there may be persons and groups in Germany strong enough to resist the sentence of a perpetual state of warfare which Hitler seems to wish to pass on Germany. We should remember that the leaders of the Nazi State, able though some of them are, have different views about the future of their country and are divided into conflicting groups. If out of this situation a more reasonable Germany emerges, what we have to look for is the possibility of a United States of Europe, in which the German peoples, like other Powers, have their own *Lebensraum*, in which no Power dominates and in which sovereignty gives place to national independence within a European Federation. That may seem to-day a far cry, and in this moment of uncertainty, when strategic and political factors of the utmost importance are hidden from us, it would be absurd to pronounce in detail about the future. What we can say with certainty is that our immediate goal must be to overthrow the Nazi regime and that our ultimate goal must be a Europe free from the menace of armed diplomacy conducted by a threat of war.

A MEMORY OF POLAND

BREST-LITOVSK reeks of evil memories, and this week it added one more to its legend. Its name carries for me also a pungent aroma of evil, for I spent some days within it during the early weeks of 1919. The Germans, demoralised and disarmed, had only just walked out; the Poles, flushed with vainglory, had only just walked in. Dim memories haunt me of hectoring colonels and vivid memories of terrorised Jews. The colonels were convinced that these incredible survivals from the ghettos of the Middle Ages, who still wore their black caftans, their long beards and the curl prescribed by ritual, were all of them Bolshevik conspirators. The result was a continual and sinister crackle of rifles by night. In the streets by day it was the practice of the Polish troops to catch the first Jew who came their way, preferably a grave and venerable man, whom they then compelled to clean the latrines of their barracks. The town was packed with refugees, who had fled from hunger and typhus in Russia to hunger and terror in Poland. The Christians huddled in helpless disorder, leaderless and unwashed. The Jews had instantly brought order into the great barn where they were housed. They had swept it clean, set up their communal kitchen and assigned to each family its private nook. But among them also typhus raged. Their rabbi in his strange jargon, half German, half Yiddish, lamented to me that the only Jewish doctor in the town had just died. I was still new to this land whose races live in the isolation of perpetual hate. "But surely," I said in my innocence, "you can call in a Catholic doctor?" The rabbi raised his hands in a gesture of eloquent despair.

From Brest, in a paralytic train, I travelled over the uninhabited plain to Pinsk amid the gleaming Pripet marshes. Four years earlier the Grand Duke Nicholas, when he retreated into the Russian interior, had carried the Orthodox population with him. Their lives were too precious to entrust to the charity of the German invader. In their millions the Cossacks drove them to face sanctified hunger and orthodox disease. The Jews and the few Catholics were left behind to endure the Teutonic fury. It was, I gathered, somewhat kinder than Tsarist mercy. The Jews, for the first time in six centuries, took to tilling the forbidden soil. Beyond Pinsk lay the elaborate German trenches, deserted and waterlogged. Across them, in the broad No Man's Land, Polish regulars, Ukrainian partisans and Communist bands skirmished in the confusion of mutual fear. I watched a company of Polish conscripts marching out into the night. Not one among them had a greatcoat; some lacked a shirt. When they grounded arms, their rifles rang on the frozen earth, as if it had been stone.

Pinsk lay in the grip of famine and religion. Most of it was Jewish; a minority was Catholic. I visited the Catholic Co-operative Stores, housed in a monastery. On the walls was a fresco of St. Francis preaching to the birds; the saint wore a full-bottomed wig and an elegant peach-coloured coat. There was also, if I remember rightly, a wonder-working Madonna in its chapel. She healed the sick; she consoled the bereaved; above all, she kept the pious peasants tranquil under oppression. One miracle, however, she never had performed; it is not recorded that she ever softened the heart of a Polish landowner. After surveying these treasures, I was taken to see the stocks of food in the store. It had an ample supply of salt, and that was all. The more frugal part of the population of Pinsk lived on hoarded potatoes; the rest of it awaited death. One has read of besieged towns in which men dropped dead in the street. I saw it happen in Pinsk, and in the morgue the police insisted that I should view these victims; what I saw was skeletons draped in rags.

It was fortunate for me that the commandant of the town invited me to be his guest, for he had some tinned food and a sufficiency of drinks and vodka. He was a pleasant young man from Cracow, who had served in Pilsudski's legion, and with the aid of beer he was soon opening his mind to me in fluent German. His task of governing this town appalled him. It was not the famine that disturbed his slumbers, but the disloyalty of the population. The Jews, he was convinced, were Bolsheviks to a man. The Ukrainians were no better. I tried to reassure him, for I had talked with the heads of the Jewish community; they were old-fashioned liberals, who used to send a "Cadet" member to the Russian Duma. I could make no impression on him, and presently he gave me his solution. He proposed to "decimate" the population, Jewish and Ukrainian alike. I pressed him hard to make sure that he meant what he said. Yes; in a few days, he would shoot one in ten—or thereabouts.

Next morning I took the train back to Warsaw and pulled every wire I could reach to secure an instant interview with Marshal Pilsudski. He received me coldly, but he listened while I told him what his young man proposed to do at Pinsk. I implored him to intervene and stop this threatened pogrom. He brushed my warning aside. "You civilians," he said, "can never understand us soldiers." "Pardon me, your Excellency," I answered, "I too have carried a rifle on the field in my younger days." The man melted at once; I had touched the romantic boy in him. He came over and took my arm in his, and talked with an almost effusive cordiality. But ten days later the pogrom duly took place. The commandant gathered the heads of the Jewish community of Pinsk within a walled enclosure, turned a machine gun on them, and massacred thirty-five.

My last memories of this borderland are relatively happier. An elderly Polish landowner found me, a belated traveller on the road, and asked me to be his guest. His home, half castle, half manorhouse, was bare of everything but books. First the Ukrainian partisans and then the Russians had sacked it. But they had left him the library that his ancestors had gathered through three centuries, with an Elzevir Horace as its chief treasure. Over a supper of potatoes he talked about literature in graceful French. The frailties of Cicero were a theme for his humour. He had, I recollect, a romantic veneration for Mary, Queen of Scots, and over me he repeated her favourite Latin prayer, as he lit me to bed. At breakfast next morning the old man told me how he had lived through four years of war. When the Cossack whips drove his Orthodox peasants into Russia, he found himself alone in a

desert, without wife or man or maid. He sent for his boy from his school at Vilna. The lad turned peasant, learned to drive a plough and kept them both alive by raising potatoes and rye. He had sat silent through the evening, while we talked of history and books, and I had taken him for a trusted retainer. The Elzevir Horace was nothing to him, but he knew how to prune an apple tree and spread manure. There must have been, I reflected, when the barbarians surged over Europe in the twilight centuries, lovely villas left standing amid the ruins of the Empire, in which old men survived, conning Greek manuscripts in pillaged rooms, while the Goths enjoyed their wealth. Not all at once, nor without the flicker of a false dawn, did the darkness compass them around. As the months of desolation lengthened into years, these old men hoped for the return of civilisation, and dying prayed that their sons would live to see it. Their sons lived like barbarians, dimly recalling the interrupted studies of their youth. Their sons' sons were barbarians born.

Presently the young man drove me to the nearest railway station. An endless straight road lay before us. The dust had settled down to nourish the grass that grew upon it, for months had passed since the rearguard of the last army in retreat had left it to silence and to peace. Beyond it, on either side, stood the forest. It was infinitely older than the road. Its trees had stood in their unbroken ranks, when the first human pioneers, hot on the track of bison or bear, burst into its brushwood. It had submitted first to the invading ox-waggon, and then to carriage and car. It had felt the axe of the conqueror about the trunks of its trees till, year by year, the free space on either side of its roadway had widened into spreading acres. Four years ago they were fields of yellow corn, where at each harvest man celebrated his victory over the forest. And then came war. The plough lay rusting. Over the first field the fir trees scattered their cones, and where corn was wont to spring, a young forest covered the soil. As I drove over the green road, the forest kept its ranks like a regiment that stands erect, while the front file kneels. In the distance, tall and sombre, were the older trees. Midway was the fresh verdure of the saplings. By their feet at the road's edge, one could just discern the shoots of this year's growth. In ordered ranks and disciplined companies the forest advanced. In four years, with war as its ally, it had obliterated the toil of ages. H. N. BRAILSFORD

A LONDON DIARY

THE Ministry of Information reminds me of Freud's picture of the human mind. The conscious layers are above ground. Here thoughts are supposed to be put into coherent form. Beneath these conscious layers the Censor reigns in a basement full of dark secrets which defy anything but the longest and most searching analysis. The result of this censorship in both cases is the same. The conscious thoughts are confused and retarded by irrational inhibitions. True stories of the facts of this censorship are less common than rumours, but I may mention without indiscretion the case of an article lifted entirely from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at the suggestion of one of the press advisers, which was censored on the ground that it divulged military secrets; in another case a dossier of photographs which had appeared in such papers as *Picture Post* and in news films was held up by the censor for a considerable period, one reason being that no copy of *Jane's Fighting Ships* was to hand. I understand from a good source that the regulation is now being changed which made it possible to photograph three soldiers of different regiments together, but not three soldiers of the same regiment, because they made a formation, or three soldiers near or approaching a public vehicle because they were an assembly.

* * *

We have all agreed that the evacuation of schoolchildren and mothers with babies was a great achievement, admirably carried out. In the circumstances, when great raids were expected immediately on the outbreak of war, it is not perhaps surprising that the problems arising out of prolonged evacuation should not have been thought out. Some of them were discussed in the House of Commons last week. They are extraordinarily interesting from the point of view of a social observer: they are also serious and will have to be tackled on a big scale. In many cases, of course, the children have settled down well, and local problems can be cleared up locally. But the problems are very widespread. A very common complaint—I hear it wherever I go—is about the verminous children and, even worse, the children with infectious or contagious diseases. One village to my knowledge received 600 Liverpool children, of whom no less than 485 had such complaints. This of course happened because the war began in the holidays before the Medical Officer had a chance to deal with the usual slum diseases. It seems clear that we can never again ask the country people to accept children into their houses until they have been medically examined, preferably in their home towns, or, if that is not possible, on arrival in the evacuation areas. There are other minor difficulties about the children which will become major problems unless they are dealt with. First, there is the difficulty which working-class householders find in keeping middle-class lads on 8*s*. 6*d*. a week. I know of one case where a family with an income of 46*s*. a week was trying to satisfy the appetite of a secondary schoolboy of 17. Last Sunday, the parents arrived in a nice car, and having shared the Sunday dinner, thanked the foster-mother for the trouble she had taken and gave the boy 6*d*. pocket-money. The foster-mother remarked that the boy would need a hair-cut. "Oh, he can take that out of the pocket-money," replied the father and drove off. I can add many other less spectacular examples: a farm labourer, for instance, whom I know well and who was delighted to take in two little girls for an emergency, now complains bitterly that the parents, who get their usual pay at home, give nothing for the children's upkeep and come down for a day's outing on Sundays and expect two good meals for nothing! Some of the children do a good deal of damage one way or another and cottagers want to know who is going to pay for it. If you have about 30*s*. a week, as the labourers have in our village after paying their insurance money, you've not much left for new mattresses and so forth and you cannot afford to have all the week's meat eaten on Sunday. This last point presumably will be met when rationing comes in.

* * *

A second major point on which there is general agreement is that the adult evacuees have not settled down anything like as successfully as the children. What I wrote last week about the unreasonableness of expecting women to leave their husbands for the duration was confirmed by a conversation I had with a Spaniard who had organised this work in Catalonia. He said the children settle down all right, but adults cannot be successfully transplanted except in family units. And he added, what the authorities should specially note—that in air raids the evacuees always panic first: a civilian is bravest in his own home with his own people. One suggestion which is worth consideration is that adults, if they must be moved, should be put into small communities and that the large country houses should be commandeered for this purpose. Many owners of large houses have already been very generous in taking big parties of children. This method of housing the adults should be used in many difficult cases where to my knowledge village life has been turned bitter and angry by town and country quarrels.

* * *

I was glad to hear John Hilton the other night going hot and strong for the profiteers in his wireless talk. Really, the price-raising ramp in the provinces for clothes and household goods is intolerable. Many stores have simply marked up everything costing 2*s*. 6*d*. to 3*s*. on the egregious excuse of war insurance, thus netting at least 15 per cent. profit. A friend of mine was talking to a saleswoman in a high-class

drapery store in the Midlands. "My job makes me sick," she said. "I am in the blanket department, and on the first day of war we were ordered to take all our very large stock of blankets down to the cellars. Since then we have kept only four or five pairs in the sales-room and throughout the day I have to repeat the same sickly story to our customers. "Oh, madam, you are lucky. These are positively the last blankets we have. Of course, they are a trifle expensive . . ." That is the way in which one store has managed to dispose of all its blankets, however inferior their quality, at maximum prices.

* * *

I was talking to a Left-wing bookseller whose sandals and beard have made him a conspicuous figure for years now. "Look at all that stock," he lamented, "what can I do with it?" There were piles of Communist Party literature, pamphlets, papers and books; adulations of Soviet Russia, pictures of Soviet Russia, explanations of Soviet Russia; speeches of Stalin, Left Book Club selections, histories of the Russian Revolution in which Stalin's role was enormously exaggerated and Trotsky never mentioned. "No one will touch it," he said. Sighing, he added: "I found an old copy of the *Daily Worker* just now. August. It had an article by J. R. Campbell saying that the suggestion that Stalin might come to a secret agreement with Hitler was a vile slander. People don't know what to think." Officially, of course, Party members are still being told what to think. The Nazi-Soviet pact was "a blow for peace and Socialism." I transcribe these words, though they seem to me to have no meaning. Rapidly they are beginning to have no meaning for anyone else either. And I find a certain amount of human satisfaction at the downfall of the pundits. They have been so arrogant and unctuous in their day. The *Labour Monthly* and the *Daily Worker* had had their pat "dialectical explanation" for everything, and never allowed that disagreement with them could arise from anything but imbecility or treachery. And what contempt their editorials radiated! How short a time since I smiled to myself to hear a well-known Communist rashly commit himself on the platform of a gigantic stadium to the assurance that whatever else changed, it was always and forever certain that the U.S.S.R. would stand fast against Fascism! The present situation is rather like one in which the most unco' guid of the elders of the kirk has been caught in carnal sin. The town is shocked, it knows that morals have suffered a terrible blow, it holds up its hands; but at the back of its mind there is a faint but distinct feeling which is not wholly that of dissatisfaction.

* * *

The blow to Communist organisations everywhere is bound to have more serious consequences than punctured pompousness. There is much sheer bewilderment and in some cases it may lead to apathy and a temporary withdrawal from the struggle. There will not, I think, be much swing towards Fascism here—at least of the Continental varieties—because the disillusionment arises, in this case, from the fact that the Communists have made a pact with what they have always declared to be the forces of evil. If you are shocked because your leader goes to the devil, you don't yourself follow him to the devil at once. I think there may be a strengthening of numbers both among the Labour Party and the I.L.P.; ultimately, there will be an improvement in strength and clarity in the Labour movement as a whole. The Communists and their fellow travellers have trained a whole generation in devotion, organisation and Socialist thinking. That will not be wasted. But this débâcle will break down the barrier which kept them aloof from their natural colleagues—a barrier which was also their one great lapse from mental honesty. It was the belief, in its crudest terms, that "Stalin is always right," not only from the Russian point of view (which he may well be now) but also from the point of view of world peace. This dogma helped the weak, in so far as it took responsibility away from them. But ultimately Socialists cannot evade responsibility: they may not have either a father-figure or a Führer. If it is taken from them, that will hurt. But the deprivation will make them grow up, will make them rely on themselves; and revolutions must be made by grown-up men.

* * *

The dissyllabic name of a British town shall never pass my lips, for it is one of the homes of the B.B.C., and it is kept a profound secret. A profound secret from whom, you ask? Well, as *Reynolds'* pointed out, Sir Samuel Hoare divulged it a fortnight ago. It has also been named on the German radio. So I think the answer can only be—a profound secret from the British public alone. Meanwhile, making every allowance for the limitations of broadcasting from Cloudcuckooboro', I would like to suggest that the British public could be allowed, as an alternative to the one "home service," part at least of the foreign service. It would not involve constructing a new programme, and most of what I hear on my short-wave receiver seems perfectly suited to home consumption. The programmes as a whole could be greatly improved, though the brilliant return of the "Band-wagon" on Saturday night suggests a new buoyancy in "variety" and some of the recent talks have been worth listening to. Disorganisation should have been overcome by now. In many things war means putting up with second best because the best is needed for the war. But to-day many of the best actors and musicians are absolutely idle, and used neither for the war nor for anything else. They would be only too glad to take a journey to the Unknown City, blindfolded if necessary, and the B.B.C. should take its chances of bargains.

* * *

I notice in Hitler's speech at Danzig an interesting passage which has not been much commented on. "But do not deceive yourselves; the moment may come when we use a weapon which is not yet known and with which we could not ourselves be attacked. Let us hope that we will not be forced to use this means. It is to be hoped that no one will then complain in the name of humanity." The interesting thing for me about this mysterious threat is that I heard it almost verbatim some months ago as part of a conversation which Hitler had had with one of his closest English friends. Hitler said "with tears in his eyes" that he could destroy the English people with this secret weapon, and he added as he shook her hand: "I fear that I may have to use it quite soon."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Rev. T. Dixon.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

But, say some, you may use force, but you must not take life. Is there any force that can be used without the risk of life being lost? When Jesus drove the men out of the temple, loss of life was risked. One might have fallen down the temple steps and broken his neck.—*Yorkshire Evening Press.*

Now that cinemas are reopening, many women have decided that they need a black evening gown.—*Evening Standard.*

I suggest that besides the "All Clear" police should start singing the National Anthem. It would be taken up by everyone everywhere. —Letter in *Daily Sketch.*

Those who noticed in the papers the other day the mention of Mrs. Fitzherbert's coffin must have felt that in spite of the evil things of these days the world has moved forward. In Mrs. Fitzherbert's day one of the most famous political leaders, Charles James Fox, deliberately lied to the House of Commons by declaring that Mrs. Fitzherbert was not married to the Prince of Wales. Mr. Fox knew the statement to be false.

It is not thinkable that any public man could stand up in Parliament and tell a lie to-day.—*Children's Newspaper.*

BRIGHT SIDE

I CAN hear voices—cheerful, unapprehensive voices—discussing Hitler in the neighbouring section of the bar. "I wouldn't like to be in *his* shoes," says one. "He'll be making a bolt for it soon, I reckon," says another. "They won't let him make a bolt," declares the first voice. "Well," says a new voice, "he's asked for it, hasn't he?" "I don't blame Hitler so much," says another one; "I reckon fellows like Goebbels are most to blame. Hitler's been misled by bad advisers." And so the talk goes on, covering the whole European situation, Russia and all, which is admirably summed up by an old philosopher who says: "It's a funny set-to, to *my* way of thinking."

Conversations like this, no doubt, are going on in every country inn in England, punctuated by the "tock" of the darts as they strike the dart-board. There is an atmosphere of peace even in the discussion of war. Not that the talkers are ignorant of war. There is scarcely a man over middle age who comes into the inn who is not an old soldier or who did not lose a son or a brother in the war that ended temporarily in 1918. There has never been a time when at the outbreak of a war so great a proportion of Englishmen knew what war means from experience. The greybeard was in the Boer War. The village postman was in "Mespot" and smiles at the memory of soldiers carrying umbrellas—khaki umbrellas—to ward off the rays of the murderous sun. "More men died of heat-stroke than of wounds," he says. I ask him whether it is true that salt is a preventive of heat-stroke. "I don't know," he says, "but I was always fond of salt myself. I like everything I eat to taste of salt." And he remounts his bicycle and goes off with a cheerful "Good afternoon."

If the Greeks were right in idealising *ataraxia* as the wise man's proper attitude to life, then, it seems to me, there must be great reserves of wisdom in rural England. The beautiful imperturbability of the countryman is something to wonder at. He cannot make head or tail of Russia, but he feels less indignation against Russia than against the man from the city who has just bought a large farm in the district and is warning the villagers not to use paths that they have been free to use for years. What a moment in the history of Europe for a man of means to choose to turn children out of a wood that had been their playground! I hope the Minister of Health will introduce an emergency measure giving children the liberty of the woodlands, and, indeed, of all open spaces except cultivated ground for the duration of the war. It is true that a few of the children who have arrived from town are inclined to treat cattle as animals created for their amusement—creatures of the chase to be kept on the run—but they can, I imagine, be educated out of that in a week or two.

On the whole, the village seems to be lucky in its imported children. They are a nice lot, according to general report, and, as they run across the green with their gas masks, they look as happy as if they were digging the sands of Margate in August. Occasionally, as was to be expected, one hears stories of dirt and vermin. There is the old pensioner, for example, who found room in his cottage for a small boy. "When he stripped him to put him to bed," a neighbour told me, "he says he couldn't see his flesh for flea-bites. He took his clothes right out into the garden and burnt 'em, and had to go next day and buy him a new suit." "Ah, well," said some one, "he could afford it. He has thirty bob a week." In other villages such burnings seem to be more common, and I have seen one or two letters that suggest that a few quiet country places have been converted by the evacuation into distressed areas. One woman I know says that after her experiences she will never have any sentimental associations with the word "mother" again. Anyone could have foreseen, of course, that among the thousands of mothers transported from the towns there would be a small percentage of women who would be not too clean and even semi-imbecile. But the semi-imbecility of some of these women has come as a shock to their hostesses. One lady in the north took in a mother and four children only to find that the women refused to exercise the slightest control over her family. One evening, hearing a terrific row overhead, she went upstairs and discovered the mother sitting placidly in her chair while the children were romping and dancing about the curtained room with lighted candles in their hands. Here, fortunately, nothing of this sort has happened. The air is rather one of general kindness. A clergyman said to me the other day: "This is going to do good. It should abolish for ever two names I never liked—'country bumpkin' and 'guttersnipe.'"

They certainly manage to look on the bright side of things down here, and, indeed, if it were not for newspapers and wireless, it would be difficult to believe that any other side existed. The sun shines, and a pleasant wind brings the fruit tumbling from the pear-trees. The roses and the sweet-pea in all its variety of red and pink and white and purple are in bloom. A ruby-tailed fly, his blue-green head gleaming in the golden light, wanders over the wood of the draw-well, looking for something to eat. There is no sign of apprehensiveness in any living creature within sight, with the exception of the blue-tit that has perched on the basket of bacon-fat swinging under the plum-tree. It seems strange that a bird that is, on the whole, so well treated by human beings should never have lost his fear of them. If you can judge by his movements, life to a blue-tit must be a prolonged reign of terror. He looks round him nervously before daring to take a peck at the fat. Before he has had time to swallow it, he gives a start as though his worst enemy had laid a hand on his shoulder. He then hops to a different part of the basket, rapidly surveys the four points of the compass, wonders with fluttering heart whether one is really alive, and, hoping that one is not, decides to take a risk and have another bite. A nervous wreck as a result of his daring, he suddenly makes a bolt for it into a thicket of the tree. It is only when his pulse has become moderately steady that he ventures once more to approach his pendent dinner-table. Thereupon the little drama of nerves is gone through all over again. Is it possible, I could not help asking myself as I watched the blue-tit, to live happily in such a world of constant apprehension? Would life be worth living for a human being if between every mouthful of food and the next he had to jump up from the table and look out of the windows and doors in fear of potential enemies? Yet, according to one of my friends, all wild creatures live under some such strain. "I suppose even lions and tigers have something to be afraid of," he said;—"in fact, all animals except elephants." "Why not elephants?" asked a little girl of six. Strange to say, he could give no reason for his confidence in elephants. Even if elephants lead the tranquil life that my friend suggests, however, I cannot help thinking that the nervous blue-tit is happier than the tranquil elephant. His bell that will be ringing through the world again before very long makes it impossible to doubt this.

Yet there is no denying that for placidity one has to turn from the wild creatures to the domesticated animals. Man is a wolf to man, according to the proverb, but horses and cows and dogs and cats trust him. Even hens, who have the least reason of all to do so, trust him. They have confidence in their fate, which, till the bad moment arrives, is mostly food. I have seen a cat purring with his tail up during an air raid in the small hours, happy to be able to rub himself against human legs at such an unexpected time of night. One cannot help feeling more cheerful in the company of an animal so unperturbed by the calamities of mankind. A cat sleeping by the fire while the heavens are falling—what better example could there be of the *ataraxia* of the philosophers?

Small children, too—for the time being, at least—have this blessed imperturbability. Even if they are in the room when the war news is being broadcast, they are not distracted from their private affairs. The fact that Germany is once more writing the false epitaph, *Finis Poloniae*, over the east of Europe does not disturb them in their games. The little girl of six dances on the lawn in the sunset to the accompaniment

of her shadow. "Look," she cries, pointing to her shadow, "how tall I am. Look." And her shadow is undoubtedly a good six feet. Having danced her fill, she goes to bed with a stick of Edinburgh rock, leaving the world to the new moon riding westward and two long-eared bats wheeling and zigzagging high in the air above the pond. "What an excellent world!" you would say to yourself, if you did not know from the report of the Ministry of Information how bad it was; "what a world of good humour, kindness, serenity, play and peace!"

Y. Y.

WEATHER REPORT

(In time of war all weather reports are forbidden by the Censor)

A HURRICANE
From the Polish plain
Is travelling westward fast.
Wind moderates
In the Balkan States
But skies are overcast.

East of Berlin
Bright spells set in,
Moscow is fine and warm,
But squalls that blow
From the Maginot
Foretell advancing storm.

The French report
Bright periods (short),
Some fog round Whitehall lies,
But watching posts
Round British coasts
State temperature tends to rise.

Main inference—
Cloud dark and dense,
A European cyclone,
Gales in succession,
A deep depression,
And further outlook, unknown.

SAGITTARIUS

Miscellany

COUNTRY NOTES

September

WITH the prospect of devastation hanging over us, the impression of fecundity produced by the countryside the past fortnight strikes one as painfully ironical. All crops seemed to come to fruition at once: the corn, the apples and the hops. These things happen every year, but this year one noticed them more poignantly than usual. For one thing, a number of the ordinary farm workers had been called away to grimmer jobs, and their place was taken by amateur improvised labour. Skinny little boys from London raked the chaff and cavings from under the threshing machine; handsome, elegant young men waiting to be put into uniform heaved trusses of straw from stack to cart; schoolboys climbed into apple trees and picked, for once legitimately, the huge green cookers into bushel baskets. Everything hummed with liveliness; the thresher hummed literally, so did the drying-fans in the oast-house; there was a constant burr from stackyard and oasts; the air smelt of hops; dust-motes flew about; large horses stood waiting patiently between the shafts of large waggons; peaches and nectarines on the wall ripened so rapidly that the blush came over them as over the cheeks of a girl; figs turned as brown as Syrian sailors. A sudden hurry woke the somnolent farm to life; everyone took a hand, grateful for the physical activity which puts a stop to thought; everything bore its own particular fruit. This teeming effect has been increased by the quantities of extra children straying all over the place, as though country families were inordinately prolific. Swinging on gates, smeared with blackberry juice in the lanes, they have turned the country into a warren. Some of them, I understand, are not too popular with their hosts and hostesses. There is one story of two little boys, left behind to play while the farmer and his household went out to work; on his return he found a cloud of feathers and a squawking barnyard full of completely naked chickens. Decidedly, being in the country is great fun.

Then there are the land girls, an unfamiliar sight in the orchards and among the cows; picturesque in their brown dungarees, tossing their short curls back and laughing. I came across two of them picking plums; very young they were, and standing under the tree loaded with the blood-red drops, their arms lifted, the half-filled baskets on the ground beside them, they could scarcely have looked prettier in their lives than on that sunlit morning.

Black-out

In contrast to the sunlit days came the starlit nights. I could imagine nothing more desirable and mysterious than these black secret nights, were it not for the sinister intention behind them. I suppose that one should not allow the intention to impair one's appreciation of this new beauty of the starry night. The moon has gone, and nothing but stars and three planets remain within our autumn sky. Every evening I go my rounds like some night-watchman to see that the black-out is complete. It is. Not a chink reveals the life going on beneath those roofs, behind those blinded windows; love, lust, death, birth, anxiety, even gaiety. All is dark; concealed. Alone I wander, no one knowing that I prowl. It makes me feel like an animal, nocturnal, stealthy. I might be a badger or a fox. All voices are stilled as though by a hand laid over noisy mouths. The experience is a strange one, making me feel more like myself and more unlike myself, more closely united to those who share my roof yet more divorced from them, than ever I felt before. I think of all the farms and cottages spread over England, sharing this curious protective secrecy where not even a night-light may show in the room of a dying man or a woman in labour.

The black-out is inconvenient to the man drying the hops from dusk to dawn. I stroll round to the oasts, and find one door left open beneath the shadow of the staging. They have hung a green silk scarf over the central lamp, so that the glaucous light of under-seas tinges the lime-washed walls to the very colour of the hops themselves. War brings an unforeseen strangeness to these small interiors of illumination.

I continue on my rounds. The Londoners' children in the village are asleep by now in their improvised beds. The land-girls, tired out, are asleep also, their brown dungarees exchanged for striped pyjamas. The four young men whom I watched at supper, four boys at the beginning of lives probably to be lost, the boys who slung the sheaves in early morning, are asleep also. All these people gathered under various roofs are asleep.

The place I love; the country I love; the boys I love. I wander round, and towards midnight discover that the only black-out I notice is the black-out of my soul. So deep a grief and sorrow that they are not expressible in words.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

THE THEATRE DURING THE LAST WAR

THE dramatic harvest of 1914 was a rich one. To 1914 belongs the first performance of *The Doctor's Dilemma* and of *Pygmalion*. In that year, too, the first memorable production of a Chehov play was given in England, the Stage Society's performance of *Uncle Vanya*. Then, there was Max's one-act comedy *A Social Success*, about a young man who endeavoured to extricate himself from a pestering

popularity by cheating at cards—in vain. Granville-Barker was still at the Savoy; 1914 saw the last of his three tradition-changing Shakespearean productions, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with its gold Cambodian fairies and English folk-lore Puck. All these were pre-August 1914 events. As I joined a Red Cross unit attached to the French army in October, I lost touch with the theatre for a time. Before the year was out, or perhaps it was early in 1915 (I only read about it), he also put on a version of *The Dynasts*, which was his last piece of work for the stage for many a year to come.

When war was declared the slogan for everyone except the idle or the fighting man was, "Business as usual." The effect of its declaration at 11 p.m. on August 4th was utterly different from that produced by the Prime Minister's broadcast at 11 a.m. on September 3rd. Although we had lived through a week of suspense, war came to us then as a sudden, unexpected call to energy and courage. It was more like a splendid thunder-crash which though it may be immediately overhead and shake the nerves also lifts the imagination. The spirit in which thousands after thousands instantly volunteered or rejoined their regiments—half joy in life, half readiness to die—infected all, or nearly all. For the moment exhilaration covered foreboding; there was a vast communal excitement in the air we breathed. You would have concluded that the great majority of men and women, except when actually fearing for themselves and those nearest them, loved war. In a scrap-book of recollections and reflections called *Experience*, I have described what I saw and divined while rambling about London till the small hours of that night—night ominous to the solitary, but gay, positively gay, to the gregarious: the roaring, chaffing crowds outside the Horse Guards and the House of Commons; the whizzing taxis filled with flags and screaming youths and girls; the novel good-fellowship among all classes round the coffee-stalls; the excited looks which said distinctly (no need for words) "This may be awful, but it's *life!*" No need to stress the contrast with to-day.

The first reaction of theatrical management to the war-atmosphere was one which might have been anticipated to be disastrous: patriotic, recruiting plays and spy-plays. In September I went to some for this paper, but they proved such heart-damping tosh that I could not write about them. I have a dim recollection of brutal and blundering Germans (once of the Kaiser himself who was received with not unfriendly derision) and of heroic British men and women in impossible situations. But that phase soon passed, the public did not enjoy such plays when it began to take in facts. During the war there was only one successful spy-play, *The Man who Stayed at Home*, in which the daring spy-catcher was effectively played by Dennis Eadie with dry humour. Women had begun going about presenting white feathers to able-bodied men not in uniform, and Eadie's polite acceptance of one of these to clean his pipe was a gesture much appreciated. But these were not the sort of plays that men on leave from the front or the training camp wanted to see. The most remarkable feature of the wartime Theatre in London was the number of prodigiously long runs; *Chu Chin Chow* for example. Either an entertainment fell instantly flat or it went on and on. *Romance*, with pretty Miss Doris Keane as the heroine, ran for a year, if I remember right. But the greatest successes of all were in musical comedy. *The Bing Boys* and *Bubbly* (extremely good shows) provided a gaiety which was appreciated more and more as the war went on. The disgusted response, on the other hand, of many soldiers to home-made patriotic stuff is enshrined in Siegfried Sassoon's bitter sonnet on listening to the song, "We know the Kaiser loves the dear old tanks."

One great stand-by during the last years of the war was "The Pioneer Players," managed by Miss Edith Craig and Miss St. John. Serious drama survived, and thanks to them we saw several foreign plays: that strange symbolistic piece *The Theatre of the Soul* by Evreinov, Herman Heijermans' poignant *The Hired Girl* (she was a successful blackmailer), and that splendid drama by Claudel *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, which is the most moving religious play I have ever seen. In 1917 Barrie produced *Dear Brutus*, one of the very best of his plays, which scored a great success. It might be revived now with profit, being the key of Mr. Priestley's exciting plays on time-themes. I remember, too, that the censor relaxed his anxious watchfulness and allowed us to see Shaw's *Blanco Posnet*. The Stage Society produced James Joyce's *Exiles*—bewildering but interesting, and I think it was to them we owed D'Annunzio's *La Citta Morta*. After the armistice Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* hit exactly the mood of the moment—the pacifist reaction.

The deduction to be made from this brief survey is obvious. In times of direst misery and strain human beings must have distraction; they still want to laugh and think. And there is something comforting to the inactive in the retort of the man of letters who being asked why he was not at the front trying to save civilisation replied, "I am part of the civilisation they are trying to save."

DESMOND MACCARTHY

VOLTE-FACE

(The English theatre re-opened on Thursday, last week, at Golders Green with a revival of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. It will be remembered that on the platform at Reading Station a man walked up to Wilde, after he had been sentenced, and spat in his face.)

He spat and passed.
The pederast
Nor bowed, nor shook his head;
The world unkind
Drew down the blind
On one it deemed was dead.

The man who hissed,
The moralist,
Now laughs to split his side;
The world uncertain
Rings up the curtain
On one who has not died.

X

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Star-Maker" at the Plaza
"I Was a Captive of Nazi Germany" and "Mr. Flow" at Studio One

The cinemas have opened, not with a bang but a whimper. *The Star-Maker* is a vehicle for Mr. Bing Crosby. The insipidity of its plot and the flatness of its dialogue are in the best Musical Comedy tradition, but an interesting innovation is the absence of all ordinary sex-appeal. Instead of the customary blondies, a regiment of small children provide the chorus. They also provide an answer to the old riddle: "What makes a worse noise than one child singing?"—the answer is "Eighty children singing." The simple may find something cute, the senile something appetising, in rows of ringletted little Shirleys turning somersaults, but the comments of Mr. Ned Sparks, who plays a publicity agent with a loathing for children, will find an echo in many spectators. The film is distinguished by the débuts of Mr. Walter Damrosch, the eminent conductor, aged 77, and of Miss Linda Ware, a soprano aged 14. It would be unfair to judge her voice from this performance: the loud-speaker in cinemas exacerbates the female voice, and would make even Melba sound like a train-whistle. Finally it should be explained that the film is a success-story about a song-writer who makes a fortune running child-acts in all the music-halls of America. On the first night of his most ambitious production, he is dumbfounded to learn that the employment of children under 12 after 10 p.m. is illegal: he has been so busy, he explains, organising his kids, that the legislation on the subject has escaped his notice. This film has a faint flavour of unintended surrealism, and several of the boy-actors chosen would seem to be suffering from hydrocephaly.

I Was a Captive of Nazi Germany is presented to us as the true story of Miss Isobel Steele, an American journalist who was arrested for espionage. She plays the principal part herself, and the other actors are anonymous "for fear of reprisals." As entertainment the film is tedious, as propaganda, ineffective.

Miss Steele seems to have brought misfortune not only on herself but on others by culpable simplicity. The film was originally censored—perhaps Sir William Tyrrell wished to spare us boredom. Also at Studio One is *Mr. Flow*, a French film which we have already seen some while ago. Jouvet gives a brilliant performance, but only in a subsidiary role, and the leading lady is gravely miscast. The story is pleasant nonsense about a barrister who gets mixed up with crooks and finds himself executing a burglary. Though not first-rate, this is a civilised and genuinely comic film.

"Sandbag Follies," Unity Theatre

Unity Theatre is outside the mile-and-a-half radius, and with admirable promptitude it opened its doors on Tuesday night. The actors—some of them carrying gas masks and waving their scripts—enjoyed being inside a theatre again as much as the audience. *Sandbag Follies* is a scratch revue, written and produced in three days; not all the turns are good; fun comes off a good deal better than sentiment; but the most has been made of the impromptu occasion, and—blessed relief at the moment!—there is a steady trickle of satire. A compère reads out from time to time bulletins which parody the sort of news we have recently heard too often; the "Cliveden quartet" of *Babes in the Wood* returns with a song about fighting for the right things ("It's a frightful bore"); there are hits at Hitler, air wardens, shelters and other topicalities. The B.B.C. is dismissed with: "That concludes our programme of gramophone records; before proceeding to a programme of gramophone records, we will first put on a gramophone record." One waited with some curiosity for references to Russia: would that topic be discreetly missed? No, in a pub scene two labourers came to the point, and half-defiantly, half-humorously bustled through their statement of the Russian case. The awkward moment was over, the hush rose. Not all the turns, by the way, reflect war; the best of the skits was a take-off of *Waiting for Lefty* in Unity's early style. As usual the cast is anonymous, so that one cannot pick out actors by name; but the compère succeeded in being consistently funny and he was helped by a delightfully flustered warden who delivered wrong dispatches. The programme tells us that *Sandbag Follies* will be changed and added to as the show finds its feet. Though extremely uneven, it is well worth going to; and at the moment Mornington Crescent is no darker, and seems hardly more difficult to discover, than Shaftesbury Avenue.

Paintings by Contemporary British and French Artists at the Lefèvre

The directors of the Lefèvre Gallery deserve our gratitude for opening a new show of pictures. With the National Collections invisible, one depends for visual art on the enterprise of the dealers; we are glad that the Leicester Galleries, Messrs. Tooth and the Redfern Gallery are open and promise us exhibitions. During the last war pictures sold remarkably well—especially after the beginning of the air raids—and several painters made their reputation. Financial risk is likely to keep nineteenth-century French pictures out of our sight, and this may even be welcomed as giving a better chance to living artists. The Lefèvre show is an agreeable salmagundi: Duncan Grant shows a good landscape, *Highgate*; and his *Aphrodite*, at the July exhibition so hung as to be almost invisible, now exposes all her beauties. Mr. Grant's heavily painted pictures are not usually his best, but this is a most interesting work, grandly designed, with a continuity of magnificent passages of paint. Otherwise Mr. Graham Sutherland's *Red Monolith* is the most impressive thing in the show; and Mr. Bergen's Still Life the most surprising. He has radically changed his style: where he used to erupt volcanoes of paint till his canvases became bas-reliefs, he now—war-time economy?—achieves a surface like a frozen lake; where there were brutal contrasts of colour, now one white is delicately set against another. This picture will no doubt be snapped up for a drawing-room—Mr. Bergen's virtuosity would at any time enable him to become a most prosperous painter. But his record makes such a diversion of his talent improbable, and one can welcome this picture, even if one cannot wholeheartedly like it, as a sign of the artist's eagerness to explore new ground. Mr. John Piper's *Brighton Pavilion* is a fourth picture that will naturally arrest the visitor's attention. It is gay and imaginative, and proves the profit derived from years in the serious study of abstraction. There are good paintings in the show by Francis Hodgkins, Ethel Walker, Vanessa Bell, Winifred Nicholson, Brynhild Parker, Katharine Church, Ivon Hitchens and R. O. Dunlop.

Correspondence

THE NEW SITUATION

SIR,—The outstanding fact in the recent revolutionary changes in the international situation is that it has taken the Left, and especially the Communist Party, completely by surprise. I have never witnessed greater amazement than I have found in these circles during the last few days.

The capitalist classes, too, are baffled by the new turn of events, for while many of them have known for some time what was happening to private financial and economic interests in Nazi Germany—which knowledge, by the way, enabled them to support the Government in turning from a pro to an anti-Nazi policy—they had not anticipated anything quite so revolutionary as a line-up between Germany and Russia.

The tragic mistake of the Left has been their complete inability to recognise what was actually taking place in Germany. In spite of easily ascertainable facts, a large part of the Left has persisted in saying that Nazism was merely monopoly capitalism. Up to two years ago I also accepted that view, but certain reports I began to receive caused me to doubt its accuracy and to pursue some inquiries. I soon discovered that the Nazi regime was undermining, and with considerable rapidity, the power of private finance and indeed the entire citadel of capitalism, in Germany.

In pursuing my inquiry, I made the further discovery that what was being done was in conformity with the Nazi statement of aims, while later still I came to the conclusion that the fulfilment of the Nazi purpose on the foreign front necessitated National Planning and complete national control of the nation's financial and economic resources, involving, eventually, the liquidation of capitalism.

Then came the great shock. If my conclusions were sound, it meant that Nazi Germany was in fact treading the Russian road. It also meant that the two countries would one day discover that fact, and that when they did so, one of the most unexpected and startling events in the history of the world would take place; that Russia and Germany, realising their growing unity in ideology and policy, would join hands politically.

That was eighteen months ago, since when, on ventilating my views in the press and on platforms, I have witnessed turbulent scenes at meetings and received letters which were not conspicuous for the politeness of their phrasing.

The discovery which I made eighteen months ago has of course been made by a large number of people. Perhaps I may give two quotations. A *Manchester Guardian* reviewer of Hermann Rauschning's *Germany's Revolution of Destruction* wrote:

> The similarity between Bolshevism and National Socialism is now so widely recognised that to assert it is to assert the commonplace. Herr Rauschning not only asserts it, he explains it out of his great theoretical knowledge and practical experience. He regards National Socialism and National Bolshevism as identical. He is very interesting on the prospects of a German-Russian alliance, a matter he often discussed with Hitler. Hitler himself has an aversion from the present rulers of Russia, because he thinks they are Jews. Nevertheless, Herr Rauschning appears to think that the alliance is inevitable. He thinks that it "means simply the confluence of two streams which run into the same sea, the sea of world revolution . . . It will be no ordinary coalition between two Powers for normal purposes. Germany and Russia, if they come together, will radically transform the world. That alliance is Hitler's coming great stroke."

The second quotation is from Douglas Reed's *Disgrace Abounding*.

> His (Hitler's) obvious move now, his master move that would give him game and make him world champion, would be to join hands with Russia . . . Together the world would be theirs. National Socialism and Bolshevism are not worlds apart, but close together.

The very least that can be said on this issue is that Russia has vastly more in common with Nazi Germany than with imperialist Britain.

Behind the veil of these facts, is the inescapable conclusion that on its breakdown, capitalism can find no way of escape, that dictatorship, of the Right as well as of the Left, leads to Socialism. That conclusion many capitalists are already beginning to draw. Their doing so will have an enormous influence on the course of events from now on.

But what of the future? What does the Russo-German Pact, with its latest consequence, the Russian invasion of Poland and the partition of the latter by Germany and Russia, signify, and in what ways will it affect the course of events in Europe? Let us make no mistake, this Pact is the most important international

event since the Russian Revolution of 1917, the full significance of which will not be realised for some time to come.

Molotov's speech of August 31st before the Supreme Council did not overstate the position when he said:

> Conditions being what they are it is difficult to over-estimate the international importance of the Soviet-German Pact . . . August 23rd, 1939 (the day it was signed) is to be regarded as a date of great historical importance . . . it marks a turning point in the history of Europe, and not of Europe alone.
>
> This Pact proves that no important questions of international relations, and still less questions in Eastern Europe, can be settled without the active participation of the Soviet Union; that any attempts to shut out the Soviet Union and decide such questions behind its back are doomed to failure.

Those words should be carefully pondered. It is yet too early to assess the full significance of this Pact. We do not know the degree of agreement which lay behind it, nor can we visualise the degree of agreement and collusion which will follow from it. What cannot be disputed is that it opens up enormous possibilities, which it is our duty to consider and to be prepared to face. The following estimate of the effects of increasing collusion between Germany and Russia is not, I think, unreasonable.

In Germany it may drive policy more strongly Leftward, and lead to the incorporation of Left elements in the Nazi administration, and thus to growing revolt from, and the persecution of, the Right. It will remove all prospect of a Left or people's rising against Hitler should the war be continued. Such circumstances would convert the war into an ideological conflict between two forms of totalitarian National Socialism, on the one side, and democratic imperialism on the other.

In Russia it may revive the policy of world revolution.

In Britain (and France) these changes would give rise to a new alignment of political parties on the issue of the war. Even now it is clear that any attempt to restore the old regime in Poland would involve war with Russia. Hence the extreme Left may be expected to withdraw its support of the war at an early date. The Labour Party will be divided, the bellicose official section going all out for a fight to a finish, and a very big proportion of the rank and file following the lead of the Left. The capitalist classes are also faced with a dilemma. Victory in a war against Germany and Russia is problematical, while dictatorship either of the Left or Right will be inevitable after a large-scale war; and the course of events in Germany has weakened the ardour for Fascism. The inference is obvious.

A totting up of these items reveals that prudence no less than wisdom demands an early ending of hostilities. Also it is clear that the original aims of the war cannot now be attained, and that its probable outcome would be European revolution.

As regards the longer view, perhaps two things can be said: First, that Germany and Russia are likely to pursue with almost evangelical zeal the idea of a new world economic organisation on the foundation of Socialist or National Socialist States, whence we may expect country after country to be remodelled after the pattern, say, of the States within the Union of Soviet Republics. This policy will carry with it an attack upon the Empires which, owing to the revolutionary ferment that is likely to be developed, may be carried out mainly by means of propaganda. In any case, capitalist Governments will be too afraid of revolution to venture on war in defence of imperial interests.

Second, that in the circumstances which will follow the present disturbances, the capitalist States will quickly arrive at an impasse, when they will be compelled to adopt Socialism either via democracy or, as Germany has proved, via Dictatorship, even of the Right. As many British capitalists realise what has happened in Germany, they may be sufficiently alive to the fact that they will come out better if they accept Socialism via constitutionalism than via dictatorship. It may well be, therefore, that in the difficult times ahead, an awakened capitalism may constitute the main bulwark of democracy, notwithstanding the big demands that will be made upon it.

If in this way democracy can be saved in Britain, it may turn out to be of inestimable value to the human race, for despite the achievements of Russia, the way of escape from totalitarianism has yet to be found. Thus a great responsibility rests upon the big democratic States, and in particular upon Britain, in this respect. Happily sufficient facts are now available to prove that dictatorship is unable to preserve the privileges of capitalism or to restore democratic freedom once it has been destroyed. Hence, in addition to the supreme necessity for saving democracy, there is reason to hope that prudence may save it. It still lies within the power of Britain to lead the way to a classless and stateless society via the path of freedom and democracy. No greater service to mankind is it possible to render.

These considerations help to reveal that we are now presented with a situation which calls for fundamental thinking and a recasting of our social schemes and political theories in order to seize what may be Europe's last opportunity of reaching the promised land, and possibly even of saving itself from destruction

WILFRED WELLOCK

SIR,—The honeymoon of the Hitler-Stalin marriage of convenience is now in full swing. Already, like a long-married couple, they are beginning to speak like each other. Stalin—or is it Hitler?—crosses the border "to free his blood brothers," and Hitler—or is it Stalin?—crosses the border to destroy the intrigues of finance-capitalism. What abortions will this marriage now produce?

Stalin once excused his failure to aid foreign Communists by saying that every State must make its own revolution. In those days, the "rottenness" of Capitalist States did not provide him with the excuse for intervention. Is efficient brutality now the test of a State's soundness? Without that, even Stalin must recognise that Nazi Germany is "rotten."

Bewildered Communists in England, following the *Daily Worker's* blindfolded lead, may use all the sophism that Molotov can teach them. It will fail to convince the millions of Socialists throughout the world who at last see that "the dearly beloved leader of the working class, Comrade Stalin," made a non-aggression pact with Party Comrade Hitler to partition Poland.

The crockery in this ménage will yet fly. Hitler still has the Ukrainian Hetman Skoropadcki in Berlin—Hitler, who allowed Poland to seize Teschen last September, Hitler who only shakes hands with his enemies in order the better to destroy them. What will the remaining Socialists of Russia say when Hitler asks for the Ukraine? Will they thank Papa Stalin for having betrayed their beliefs with Hitler?

MAURICE EDELMAN

SIR,—The uproar about Soviet action to save at least the Western Ukraine and White Russia, with their vast Jewish populations, from the Nazis, appears a little misplaced.

There was absolutely no move by the Soviet Government until it was clear that the combined forces of the British, French and Polish Governments could not stop the Nazis; when, in fact, the Polish Government was already fleeing the country.

To those who denounce the Soviet Government's action I ask: Did you really wish Hitler to occupy the *whole* of Polish territory, to have a common frontier with Rumania and important strategic positions against the Baltic States, and to impose on millions of Ukrainians, White Russians and Jews the Nazi regime? If so, you are a friend of Hitler. If not, you can only welcome the Soviet move, at the eleventh hour, to save at any rate a part of Polish territory from the Nazi invaders when the Polish Government was already in flight.

PAT SLOAN

SIR,—I hope you will agree that the moment has come for you to admit that, however unwise Mr. Chamberlain may have been to disbelieve in the treachery of Hitler, it is more than balanced by your own complete failure to anticipate the treachery of Stalin.

Watlington Park, Oxfordshire. ESHER

[If Lord Esher cares to look through our files he will find a long series of warnings that Germany was making overtures to Stalin and that these were likely to be successful unless Britain signed the Anglo-Soviet Pact quickly. We did not of course anticipate either the manner or the extent of the *volte-face* or credit Stalin with the intention to fix up with Hitler *during the staff talks*.—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

SIR,—By Gad, how right you always are! And now the poor Russians, purely owing to the ineptitude and procrastination of the British Government have been forced, through sheer exasperation to invade Poland and annex two provinces. Only it *is* a pity, as you said in connection with the German pact, that they did not let us know a little earlier.

C. K. (PMILB) MUNRO

WAR AIMS

SIR,—When a nation is at war it is usually told that it must concentrate its whole effort on victory and that only when the enemy is beaten will questions of peace settlement arise. It will be disastrous if such counsel prevails on this occasion. If our

young men are called upon to sacrifice their lives and all of us are to be subjected to an intense strain of endurance, we should know what we are fighting for and not merely what we are fighting against.

If this war is to be brought to a decisive conclusion and a prolonged struggle in which both sides are reduced to utter collapse is to be avoided, the German people must be persuaded, as against their rulers, that our aims are their aims. It looks, in fact, as though developments within Germany rather than military tactics will be the deciding factor. But I confess my doubt as to whether the conversion of the German people can be brought about by telling them that we do not trust Hitler or that we are determined to redress the wrongs inflicted on Poland: The essential note seems to me to be absent from the propaganda hitherto addressed to them. We have to show that not only do we call on them to change their political system, but that we ourselves are resolved to carry out an equally drastic transformation. When we have worked out our plans for a reconstructed world, when we have given it full official publicity, and when we have announced that the moment the German people are willing to take serious steps to confer on such a programme we are ready to cease hostilities, we shall have done something more effective than the most ambitious operations against the Siegfried Line.

KENNETH INGRAM

SIR,—I felt cheered up by your last number. A succession of writers, led by Critic, with their variously shaped hammers seemed to hit the same nail on the head. I am encouraged, therefore, to presume that a large majority of those in the radical tradition are agreed (1) that our war-propaganda must be specific and not "woffly," (2) that it must admit and renounce the mistakes of Versailles and post-Versailles policy, (3) that it must admit and renounce any economic monopoly involved in the British Empire. The forces against us are formidable, the mixture as before of vested interest and muddle, profiteers in money and emotion, bureaucrats and old-fashioned diplomatists. The time is short, for in a few weeks Hitler may propose his peace and then the hoardings of the world will be ready for our advertisement. Yet what is likely to happen in the present way of going? The many leaders of thought will cry themselves hoarse in their own little wildernesses. The many progressive societies will dust their offices and send placatory circulars to members who have no time to read them. I have several loyalties among these societies and I do not want my words to antagonise. But, in the name of everything worth while, can we not postpone minor differences and join for the time in boosting the fundaments of sanity and justice? The 1935 Peace Ballot proves what can be achieved by a strong unity of leadership, voluntary effort and public opinion. Who, if anyone, is now going to make the first move, the League of Nations Union, the Left Book Club, you yourself, Sir, or who? We need people of natural authority and power to give the lead.

Woning, Jordans, Bucks. E. W. EDMONDS

[We hope, probably next week, to publish a pamphlet on War Aims by Mr. G. D. H. Cole.—ED. N. S. & N.]

PRAYERS IN WAR

SIR,—Many readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION regard prayer as mere auto-suggestion, and its columns are no place for the discussion of the basic doctrines of prayer. They are, however, suited to a protest against certain abuses of prayer which disfigured the churches during the last war. One of the most disturbing pages in a terrible volume of war pictures published by the *Daily Express* depicted a couple of religious parades of troops, held behind the German and Allied front trenches respectively, in both of which the officiating padres prayed for the victory of their own side, a spectacle which was reproduced in thousands of places of worship all over Europe. "Victory" is a term easily prostituted into a desire for an opportunity to impose our personal will by force of arms upon a crushed and humiliated adversary. It is difficult to imagine any wish more alien to the spirit of religion, or more utterly opposed to the true spirit of Christian prayer. By 1919 we found ourselves in that very position, and we abused the opportunity so appallingly that the present war became almost inevitable. So might Al Capone or Jack Diamond yearn to catch the Big Shot of a rival gang unarmed in some dark and lonely place; but a gangster would not be so blasphemous as to ask God to organise such an opportunity for him. Unbelievers admit that the churches may serve a valuable function by emphasising the ethical aspects of conflict; but any such witness is largely vitiated when the same churches slide into asking God that violence may triumph over violence. Let them rather pray that peace may come swiftly by mutual consent, and that no nation or group of nations may ever again be able to indulge self-interest by violence. Hardly less repulsive were those other prayers of 1914–1918 for the personal safety of individuals, whether offered by the individuals concerned, or by their friends and lovers. We all know that in a modern war lasting, say, four years, there will be a total of not less than 15,000,000 casualties through battle, disease, and the disasters of the sea. It is natural for the individual to wish that he himself may emerge scatheless, or if he is disqualified by age from active service, that his sons and friends may survive, whilst women's love naturally dwells on husband, brother, lover or child. But if such wishes and prayers are expanded to consider those dear to others, the wish actually means "Whoever may be bereaved in this war, let it not be me!" or "Whoever makes the supreme sacrifice, let it be some other man!" In war, where so much is ignoble, little but willing sacrifice is noble. In churches consecrated to the memory of one who perfected sacrifice in his own life, and who has since inspired more sacrifice than any other individual, sincerity is destroyed and caricatured whenever a congregation is consumed by passionate longing for the avoidance of personal sacrifices, and for brutal triumph. Just as any communal prayers should concentrate upon an early peace by consent, succeeded by a just and humane settlement, so should individual prayers be focused upon readiness for personal sacrifice, and a personal service unblemished by the least taint of fear.

B. H. DAVIES

B.B.C. IN WARTIME

SIR,—I should like to support Mr. W. J. Turner's plea for more good music from the B.B.C. This is no time to reduce it. There is now only one programme, and all tastes should be fairly catered for on it. At present partiality would appear to be shown for the low of brow, particularly in the evenings. Why have dance music, when no one, probably, is dancing these dark evenings? And is it fair to have organ recitals, detested by so many, twice a day? As to "variety," "feature programmes," "Songs from the Shows" and the rest, I believe that many people enjoy them, and one must of course have fair play, but certainly in the aggregate they seem to outbalance far too heavily the amount of good music given. There should, I think, be more good orchestral and operatic records; they are easy to put on, and cheap. In the bad times we are all likely to have, to deprive people of the mitigations of music is a great mistake.

ROSE MACAULAY

SIR,—As Critic says in the current issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, "what the B.B.C. says is going to be of immensely greater importance than ever before."

But I hope the Corporation will resist any efforts to take us back to the years 1915 and 1916 for its music. They have been doing very little else for the first two weeks, and we have had the stuff one used to listen to *ad nauseam* in Y.M.C.A. huts, and places where the boys congregated to be "cheered up."

The fault of the programmes since the war started is that they have so consciously tried to "cheer us up" that they have merely emphasised the fact of the crisis. What we ought to have is the normality we have been used to. If the Proms cannot have a visible audience they will certainly have a huge invisible one, not at all a highbrow one—and the Corporation would do something to alleviate the distress among professional musicians. After all, they still exact our ten bob and they are surely not filling sandbags with the money they are not spending on programmes.

I write this while listening in to an enemy orchestra after tuning out an old gramophone record broadcast from the "Home Service."

W. F. FORRESTER

5 Observatory Road, Edinburgh.

THE ARTIST IN WAR

SIR,—Study of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations yields the conclusion that in a nation organised on a war footing the place for the artist is deemed to be the fighting forces. By artist one means, of course, the writer, the painter, the composer or performer of music, the sculptor, the actor, and so on.

It may well be that during a period of emergency such persons as these are of less immediate use than land-workers or jig and

tool makers, but, taking only a slightly longer view, is it really wise in a conflict admittedly being fought for civilisation, culture and all that sort of thing, to take so small heed of what happens to those who are generally recognised as the torchbearers of these vital interests?

The artist, because he is the only truly unique being, is also the only truly irreplaceable being. Recalling such men as Gaudier-Brezska, Brooke, Ledwidge, Edward Thomas, Cecil Chesterton, all killed by the last war, is to set one wondering a little whether civilisation's loss in their deaths was really compensated for by the military services that they performed.

The position under the present dispensation which protects the navvy (good luck to him!) is that Samuel Taylor Coleridge, were he still alive, would be pitched neck and crop into the army on the strength of his "previous military experience." You have, in other words, the anomalous position of a war waged to preserve freedom of thought in which nothing whatever is being done to safeguard the few that are capable of this very unusual activity.

1 Wellington House, SAMUEL HEALD
Botley, Hampshire.

SELF-DETERMINATION

SIR,—You say: "In these days everyone should see that a Europe aiming at self-determination of all national groups has been a failure."

I confess I fail to see that. You certainly agree with me that the new Europe emerging from this holocaust should be rebuilt upon the principles of democracy. One of the most fundamental principles of democracy is the right of every nation or national group of unrestricted self-determination. To deny this right, means, in fact, to advocate national oppression, annexation, conquest. Who else is to decide in which state a people has to live but this people herself?

European order was a failure, not on account of aiming at self-determination, but because the treaties of 1919 did not carry through this democratic principle. The restoration of the independence of the Czechs, Poles and other nations was a real progress to the stabilisation of European order. But the incorporation of national groups in these and other states without regard to their own desires was one of the causes of European unrest and of the growth of Hitlerism.

You see the only hope in a federal solution. Maybe you are right. But federation must be the result of a free decision of those nations which form a federal government. Otherwise there will be not a free federation of free nations, which would be a warrant of lasting peace, but there will be suppression of smaller nations by bigger nations, a source of permanent trouble and of new wars.

Take the example of our country. What has been done by the Munich agreement was not at all a realisation of the principle of national self-determination, as the Nazi propaganda claimed. The Munich decisions were taken without the nations of Czechoslovakia, the Sudeten Germans included, being able to say their word. The same holds true of Austria. In both cases there was annexation by force and not an "Anschluss." If the war against Hiterlism is to be waged as a war for democracy, it must be a war for the self-determination of all nations enslaved or threatened by Nazism. The restoration of Czechoslovakia and Austria as independent States with all the rights they had before Hitler's occupation should be an aim of this war as much as the resurrection of a free democratic Germany. The mutual relations between the liberated nations have to be formed on the base of perfect equality of all nations, big and small, and this is on the base of self-determination.

It was your paper which pointed out very convincingly the importance of a clear peace programme for mobilising all forces for the defeat of Hitlerism, and especially for winning over the masses of the nations suppressed now by Hitler. Therefore I hope you will publish this letter as a contribution to the discussion of this vital question. J. WINTERNITZ

[What our correspondent says is all very well; but what is to be done if nationalities live all mixed up one with another, so that the principle of national self-determination, exclusively applied, leads to a struggle of racial or national minorities all over Europe? Moreover, what is to be done if this principle is to be so applied as to cut right across economic units, and lead to impoverishment of the peoples behind the tariff walls of contending autarkic States? We agree that national self-determination is one vital principle of which account must be taken in a sensible settlement. But it is not the only principle; and unless the next peace is based on better foundations for international economic co-operation than national self-determination by itself can supply, the world will be reduced to a misery that will breed further wars. That is why we stand for a federal solution, based on national freedom, but not on the sovereign right of each national group to do exactly as it pleases.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

EVACUATED TEACHERS

SIR,—Many voices have been raised about the care of evacuated children. May I, in your columns, raise the heartfelt plea of the evacuated teacher, cut off from contact with the outside world, having at one blow renounced, not only home comforts and family, but progressive society and conversation, periodicals, music and literature, meetings and lectures, and above all, the companionship of the Left movements, feeling that the next three years promise nothing more inspiring than membership of the vicar's sewing class?

Readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION who may appreciate this position would earn the gratitude, not only of ourselves, but of posterity, if they endeavoured to contact evacuated teachers in small villages near them, gave them the opportunity of intelligent discussion, the loan of progressive literature, and the chance to hear good music. Otherwise in the "backward areas" of England, in the grip of feudalism and landed gentry, we perish. AN EVACUATED TEACHER

BOOKS IN WARTIME

SIR,—I read with a growing sense of surprise and disappointment Professor Joad's article on *Recipes for Normality* in your last issue, and found myself at the end emphatically disagreeing with almost all his arguments and suggestions. Professor Joad was dealing with a problem of intense interest at the moment; I have met any number of people who believe that the boredom is likely to be as trying in the present war as the violence, and are therefore planning a long programme of reading. What they want essentially, it seems to me, is to be able to immerse themselves in a world which will have sufficient power to draw them out of their immediate surroundings of anxiety and uncertainty. But they are not looking for a drug; they do not want to pretend to themselves that nothing tragic ever occurs in life, and they do not believe that a hearty refusal to look inwards "for the duration" is going to help them very much. On the contrary, I think they want their books to strengthen them to face their own immediate world by keeping before them a wider perspective and fundamental human values. Therefore I believe that a tragic author like Proust, who creates a picture of a whole society which has depth as well as breadth, is an excellent choice; I shall start again on Proust at once, in spite of Professor Joad's warning. I also believe, again in spite of Professor Joad, that *War and Peace* is another excellent choice (it was recommended by Mr. E. M. Forster on the wireless only the other night as good war-reading) and indeed any of Tolstoi's great novels. And though none of these books may make me see that "improved appearance of the war" which dawns on Professor Joad "after having hit a tennis ball across a net for an hour and a half," I am inclined to think they are more likely to bring a real "normality" and steadiness to my mind than stories, exclusively extrovert, "enlivened with brawl and spiced with bawdy," containing nothing to remind us of our present situation. Designed by their bracing action to make us, in Professor Joad's epithet, mellower and mellower as the war advances. JOHN LEHMANN

45 Mecklenburgh Square, W.C.1.

BOOKS FOR SOLDIERS

SIR,—Mr. David Garnett is mistaken in believing that during the last war the trenches in France were littered with copies of *Freckles*. It seems worth while to record that books were extremely scarce in the trenches. The only one I ever found lying about was Bennett's *Buried Alive*.

No doubt quantities of books were sent to France, but unless addressed to individuals they didn't reach the infantry. Once only, in my experience, was there a distribution of literature for the troops. That happened during the Battle of the Somme. Coming back for a spell to Happy Valley we found among the rations a bundle of back numbers of the *War Cry* and *John Bull*.

Laurel Cottage, Mill Hill. DANIEL GEORGE

P.S.—May I add (for the benefit of readers who may be sending books to friends and relations in France), when in doubt send a Shakespeare, pocket edition? You will, of course, post the *N.S. & N.* every week.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

A BAD translation makes it impossible for me to add my recommendation to read *Wind, Sand and Stars* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Heinemann, 10*s.* 6*d.*) to that given by the Book Society. The first qualification of a translator is that he should understand the language into which he is translating. The following example shows what the reader must expect.

> Une pelouse unie épouse les courbes des volcans : ils ne sont plus désormais que douceur. Chaque fissure est recoussue par ce lin tendre.
>
> * * *
>
> A silky turf lies snug over the curves of the volcanoes, and all is suavity in the scene. Each fissure in the crust is sutured up by this tender flax.

The translator cannot write English : he continually uses words like the verbs *to suture up*, and *to spade*, and we meet mail pouches which " constitute the dogma of the religion of his craft." Where the author is simple and economical, his translator often introduces quite unnecessary verbiage. In the original, Saint-Exupéry describes watching a Spanish peasant and his wife who have lost all beauty and grown to look like clods. He reflects :

> Un animal vieilli conserve sa grâce. Pourquoi cette belle argile humaine est-elle abimée ?
>
> * * *
>
> A deer, a gazelle, any animal grown old, preserves its grace. What is it that corrupts this wonderful clay of which man is kneaded ?

The blame for this verbose rendering may possibly be because the translation has been made from a version specially prepared for the United States market. The author may possibly have inserted the deer and the gazelle himself. The dedication to Henri Guillaumet in *Terre des Hommes* (Gallimard, 18 *frs.*) has become an offering " in homage to the Airline Pilots of America and their Dead." And the text of the book itself has been extensively rewritten, perhaps at the request of the American publishers. At all events *Wind, Sand and Stars* contains many pages, mostly filled with wind, not to be found in *Terre des Hommes*. All this is a pity, for the French book is good, and it is a pity that the charm of the original should be obscured.

* * *

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was for eight years an Airline pilot in the service of the Latécoère, the Aéropostale, and the Air France Companies, and is well known for his fine book *Vol de Nuit*. The present book is a collection of anecdotes, reflections and experiences which have come his way. A friend of mine crossing Europe some years ago in a French plane saw the pilot tying up part of the machine with string and overheard the cheery remark :

> Ça tiendra jusqu'à Paris.

One or two of the stories told here have a touch of some casualness. Saint-Exupéry tells at some length how he was completely lost over the Sahara while flying to Cisneros, and kept mistaking various setting stars for air-port beacons. Radio communication was only established when he believed his petrol was almost exhausted. Suddenly however the Toulouse radio operator, four thousand kilometres away, broke in with the information that the tanks on his machine were not standard size and held a reserve of fuel. Surely the pilot should know how much fuel his machine is loaded with before taking off ! A similar neglect of elementary precautions is revealed in the story of how the great pilot Mermoz, after making a safe landing somewhere high up in the Andes, allowed his radiator to burst during the night. The average motorist would have known enough to drain it. But without such heroic carelessness the book would have been robbed of two excellent stories. In one place the author remarks on the art with which, in *Typhoon*, Conrad gives an impression of the appalling fury of the elements by concentrating the reader's attention on events inside the ship. In particular, Saint-Exupéry mentions how the chests of the cargo of Chinese coolies were burst open and their life-savings of silver dollars slid about between decks together with their frenzied owners, in one mass. Unfortunately he has not been able to describe the storms through which he flew in the same way. The great convulsions of nature are not subjects which any but the most extraordinary writer can do much with. And Saint-Exupéry's accounts of storms, hairbreadth escapes from waterspouts and hurricanes have about them some of the slight strain which accompanies a verbal appreciation of sunsets.

* * *

The best thing in the book is the account of the author's crash in the Libyan desert during his attempt on a long-distance flight to Saigon. He apparently trusted his altimeter after barometric conditions had changed. At all events he flew almost tangentially into the ground and his plane ploughed along the surface of the desert without catching fire. Both he and his mechanic were unhurt, but were stranded with only half a litre of coffee and a quarter of a litre of white wine, a few grapes and an orange. After the first day they set off walking in a north-easterly direction. They caught dew at night in an outstretched parachute, but found that the sizing on it made the water nauseous. Very soon they began to suffer from hallucinations and to see wells, lakes, and caravans which vanished as they approached. Their attitude to these hallucinations was a queer mixture of childish shame and disappointment. They broke the truth to each other tenderly, feeling near to tears. And then at last, when they were almost past feeling of any kind, they meet a Godlike being : an Arab, who did not vanish but who made them lie down on the sands while he poured out for them bowlfuls of water. They were saved. The story of this extraordinary experience is extremely moving. I liked also the reflections which came to the author when he visited Spain during the civil war. There is an odd account of two men hallooing to each other by name across no-man's land between the trenches at night, each asking why the other one was fighting. In contrast to these pages about war and death, is the description of an ancient ruined house in Paraguay inhabited by two critical little girls. A rustle and a hiss under the table prompted him to ask a question, and the younger explained that there was a nest of vipers down a hole under the table. Luckily for Saint-Exupéry, he smiled, and the little girls, who had been watching him keenly, gave him high marks for liking vipers as much as they did themselves. *Terre des Hommes* is only a book of anecdotes and reflections, chiefly about flying, but it is as full of humanity as of adventure. It is agreeable in these days to read a book about flying in which the aeroplane is not used only for bombing and fighting. The air, to me, is far more wonderful and more beautiful than the sea, but it will never be so good a subject for literature since men cannot be shut up by it for so long. The salt wave and the white cloud, without man, can inspire only half a dozen lines of poetry, or a page or two of prose.

DAVID GARNETT

TO OUR READERS

To ensure regular delivery of your copy of this journal it is more than ever necessary to place a definite order with a newsagent or take out a postal subscription.

See centre column, page 439

NEW NOVELS

To Step Aside. By NOEL COWARD. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

The Confidential Agent. By GRAHAM GREENE. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

The Arrogant History of White Ben. By CLEMENCE DANE. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.

Supercargo. By EARL WHITEHORNE. *Harrap.* 8s. 6d.

Everything Will Be Better To-morrow. By ANNEMARIE SELINKO. *Secker and Warburg.* 7s. 6d.

No one crosses a desert for the sake of the oases, and had Mr. Coward's first essay in fiction consisted of nihilistic philosophisings illuminated with epigrams it would not have been worth reading, however well it might have become the stage. Fortunately—and even, perhaps, a little surprisingly—Mr. Coward once more shows himself to be a master of versatility, and the stories in *To Step Aside* are not only subtle, witty and observant, but unpretentious and thoroughly competent narrative. Superficially, the tales are a very varied collection. A snapshot of a decayed actor and the sad biography of an ageing floozie alternate with a character study of a tyrannous old lady and a satirical sketch of a bright young man. In fact, however, all the stories are similar in that they are unashamedly personal in approach, for where Mr. Coward's parodies of himself are not the principal characters, he stands, a suave and cynical showman, at the side of the stage in full view of the audience. This, of course, has often been his technique, but in the best of the present stories—an account of an appalling American week-end in a country-houseful of *Design for Living* characters—he takes it a stage farther and satirises not only his familiar victims but the satirist himself. For the first time Mr. Coward is thoroughly and self-consciously detached, and it is this detachment that gives his stories their endearing and attractive quality. Mr. Coward has all the equipment of a successful novelist, for he writes as a Polynesian swims—with ease, grace and unthinking assurance. He may not be able to dive from towers or stir up tumult with the double trudgen, but he is quite at home in his element and enjoys a facility that is never carelessness and a polish that is never affectation. His style, too, is beautifully suited to his matter. The characters are limited but perfect, the wit is telling if not memorable; he never stirs the passions but never offends the sensibilities. His work is that of *l'homme moyen sensuel, moyen spirituel, moyen intellectuel.* He is a perfect entertainer for the civilised man. It is sometimes instructive to compare the adjectives applied to a writer by his admirers with those heaped on him by his critics, for it will often be found that the laudatory and abusive epithets have almost the same significance and give between them a near approximation to the truth. Thus, though many call Shakespeare universal, Dr. Bowdler found him broad; and while some hold Mr. Pound inspired, others consider him raving. Mr. Coward, in his turn, has been called brilliant and profoundly human, and flashy and abysmally maudlin. The stories in *To Step Aside* lie somewhere between the two, for they sparkle without blazing and please without exciting. They are, in short, a most felicitous light entertainment.

In his way, Mr. Graham Greene is the most individual of English novelists. Each piece of his writing is as distinctively flavoured (some would say tainted) as if it were set in some curious type, and though it does not appeal to every taste, it is immediately recognised by a discriminating palate. Mr. Greene is an intellectuals' novelist, and those of his characters who are not themselves of the intelligentsia (and often when they are) are invariably freaks, psychopathics or mildly macabre caricatures. He rather resembles Dickens in his capacity for creating improbable but living types, but where the latter looked through rose-tinted spectacles, Mr. Greene uses dark glasses ever so slightly distorted. He tells a good melodramatic story, throws in plenty of action and employs all the devices of a slick thriller. But he is at once much less and much more serious than his themes, and his latest novel is as different from the ordinary spy story as Elizabethan tragedy is from *Sweeney Todd. The Confidential Agent* is described as an entertainment. D., a middle-aged, war-racked professional man, is agent for the democratic party of an unnamed country that is obviously Spain during the Civil War, and comes to England to buy coal for his Government. There are attempts on his honesty, person and life, a girl is thrown from a window, a man dies of fright, there is anarchism in a mining village and pocket-picking in the rococo mansion of a multi-millionaire. There is even that tiresome recurring factor, the bitter-sweet, sentimental-hard, hair-of-platinum, heart-of-gold little rich girl who pouts and swears and drinks and weeps and smiles whitely over her broken heart. The settings, incidentally, have the satirical inappropriateness that used to delight Hitchcock. A road-house is a background for espionage, a hearty holiday camp frames a desperate escape, a murderer follows his whey-faced victim into the dingy soirée of an esperantist club, and an Indian mass-observer is the heedless agent of tragedy. *Confidential Agent,* in fact, could be filmed exactly as it stands and make a success in the provinces, yet such a film would be no more than the inarticulate skeleton of an odd and remarkable book. Mr. Greene has written more than an imaginative adventure story, and is concerned as much with the conflicts inside D. himself as with the actual material of his exploits. D. carries the war within him, and whether he is cowering in his country's bombed capital or lurking in the squalid security of a Bloomsbury boarding-house, he is never free from terror and suspicion. All men are traitors, and D. can never be free from his persecution-fear until death at last fulfils his worst suspicions. This is by no means a flawless book. Some of the detail is faulty, the golden-hearted bitch is a whole-hearted bore and many of the characters are more than a little stagey. All the same, *Confidential Agent* is the best highbrow thriller I have read for a long time, and will certainly appeal to all secret lovers of violence and psychosis.

In some quarters *The Arrogant History of White Ben* will be called a political allegory. Ben is a scarecrow set up on a hill towards the end of the disastrous war of 1950, and with the help of a mandrake's root he comes to life and shambles, a gigantic flapping figure, into the world of men. He has little mental capacity, but with the help of a wild rhetoric and a natural aversion to crows he rapidly becomes Dictator of England and has everyone who wears a black coat or has a dark complexion torn to pieces or imprisoned in concentration cages. He flaps his long arms, lives in Westminster Abbey, where he talks to the royal waxworks like mad Ludwig, purges his Göring and Hugenberg as suspected crows, and finally turns back into a scarecrow. Miss Dane clearly has a satirical intention—Ben's resemblances to Black Benito and Brown Adolf are too laboured to be accidental—but fails from uncertainty of what she means to satirise, and from the complete lack of imagination with which she pursues her commonplace Aunt Sallies. But if her satire is too woolly to be effective, her fantasy is not nearly woolly enough, and White Ben rants as boringly as Hitler without the latter's redeeming actuality. Even in fantasy, too, one must be reasonably consistent. The newly created Ben is frightened of an electric light, but quite familiar with boots; astonished at a mirror and unsurprised by motor vehicles; he has never heard of Nelson but is born with public school table-manners. *White Ben* is too pedestrian to be fantasy and too unreal to be satire, while even some surrealist imagery does not console me for a wholesale slaughter of the unities. Miss Dane has done very much better than this.

Supercargo is a reconstruction of actual events. In the 1860's the *Caylote* arrived in South America with a shipment of coolies and took on John Douglas, an American, as a passenger for the last stage of the voyage. While they were at sea the Chinese mutinied, murdered the crew and forced Douglas to sail them back to China. After a lazy, ominous voyage across the Pacific a typhoon blew them fifteen hundred miles north of Vladivostok, and Douglas managed to escape. The coolies, however, never got home, but were caught by the Japanese and beheaded for piracy and murder. Mr. Whitehorne has made a good story out of rather scanty material, and the mutinous Chinese emerge into their doomed and pathetic individualities. Recommended to those who like their adventures spiced with history and their history with humanity.

Everything Will Be Better To-morrow is what sweet, gay, brave, adorable little Toni with her smile and her pout and her adorable doggie and her weenie flat says over the Vienna wireless when the announcer collapses because they ask him to announce a railway smash with his wife in it, and, of course, Toni's voice is so gay and brave that she immediately gets an enormous contract and marries an English peer six-foot-four by three-foot-eight with curly hair and a smile, who plays polo and gives Toni neat whiskey. (It's presumably romantic in Vienna; in England they'd have made it apricot brandy.) They're filming it in Hollywood now with Danielle Darrieux as Toni, and it is best selling in seven countries already, which shows that one International still functions properly.

JOHN MAIR

THE PRINCE IMPERIAL

The Prince Imperial. By KATHERINE JOHN. *Putnam.* 10s. 6d.

It is obvious that certain disadvantages must be attached to making a minor figure the pivot of a period study. Without his Imperial background, the hero of Mrs. John's extremely informative and entertaining book would have been a high-spirited and good-natured, but on the whole somewhat ordinary young man, neither more nor less interesting than many contemporaries. He had no time to develop an adult shape. His background, therefore, becomes all-important; and, though Mrs. John is delightfully loyal to her supposed protagonist and allows him a page or two wherever she can, and from time to time a paragraph of appreciation, he remains fixed in the dynastic legend like a fly in amber—a tiny resplendent insect which had scarcely spread its wings. The Prince Imperial's life was interwoven with an historical tragedy: his death summed up the frailty and falsity of dynastic ambitions. But in how little that he did was the choice his own!

After all, he was killed in his early twenties; and, at the age of three, he had begun to assume his imperial role, had learned to be photographed, to wear splendid uniforms and to smile at the soldiers. An excitable, affectionate child, he adored his parents. Mrs. John is at her best when she writes of the two extraordinary, ambitious, unhappy beings whose conjunction determined the Prince's destiny. Towards Napoleon III she is kindly disposed if a trifle cattish. Small, sallow, long-waisted and short-legged, the Emperor was the most indulgent and unfaithful of husbands, the most devoted and the most insensitive of fathers. He exploited his offspring's charm with the noblest intentions. . . . Eugénie presents a slightly harder problem. Less typically an adventurer than the man she had married, she was governed by ambitions that were no less fervent and had, as counterpoise, considerably less shrewdness. Moreover, she possessed the devastating gift of beauty. In her personal life, Eugénie was not a passionate woman; but she was an exhibitionist, in love with the idea of sovereignty and with herself in the twin aspects of ruler and mother. Having been reared a mere commoner, Mlle. de Montijo, without the curious inherited technique of royal personages, she mismanaged as much as she enjoyed her imperial functions and many of the effects she attempted went sadly awry. Thus, she was haughty, very often, but not always dignified, and, if she was frivolous, did not give the impression of really unbending. Stately, unusually attractive, not unintelligent, she was queenly in looks rather than queenly in the manner born.

Somehow, the Imperial Court did not carry conviction. Though its apparatus was as sumptuous as the heart could wish, though the diplomatic parties at Compiègne were as dazzling as they were expensive and exhausting, and its reviews, parades and solemnities the most brilliant in Europe, it still retained its theatrical and makeshift air. A moment came when the scene was struck with theatrical suddenness. Napoleon muddled his way into war against Prussia; the Imperial armies—so impressive and well-turned-out when they crossed the parade-ground—were prepared for the test of actual hostilities; the enthusiasm of the French people mounted to boiling-point. Naturally, the little Prince had to do his share:

> "My son," said the Emperor, "is not joining the army to play at soldiers, but to learn his *métier de souverain*" . . .
>
> . . . Of course, his going was meant as a gesture. Not that the Emperor had any consciousness of exploiting his adored son; everything he did was for Louis—but his mind worked like that. He had never known a feeling too sacred to be used as publicity. Ten years ago, he had exhibited his baby son in the *ourson* without a qualm. . . . It merely struck him as effective; he had won the throne by a patient series of effects, and they must be kept up if it was to remain in the family.

A few days later, Napoleon's mood had changed. Reaching Metz on the 28th July, he found only confusion, ineptitude, bewildered and exasperated inefficiency. "Nothing is ready," he wrote back to the Empress, as he considered an appalling welter of troops without equipment, guns without ammunition, generals without troops or precise instructions. "*. . . Je nous considère d'avance comme perdus.*" In short, the *débâcle* had begun before the war had started. Even so, the Prince Imperial, darling of the army, was allowed to potter about with his attendants behind the lines and derive a pathetic joy from the notion that he had been exposed to fire. Near Saarbrück he picked up a spent bullet; and the news, on the advice of M. Ollivier, was given to the press.

> . . . The effect, he urged, would be tremendous. It was tremendous; it was a burst of Homeric laughter. . . . Louis became *l'enfant de la balle* from that moment, and the mirth which had perhaps begun in good nature was soon envenomed by events into a howl of derision. Such was the last Bonaparte, the heir of France, a young hero strolling about in the wake of battle to pick up souvenirs!

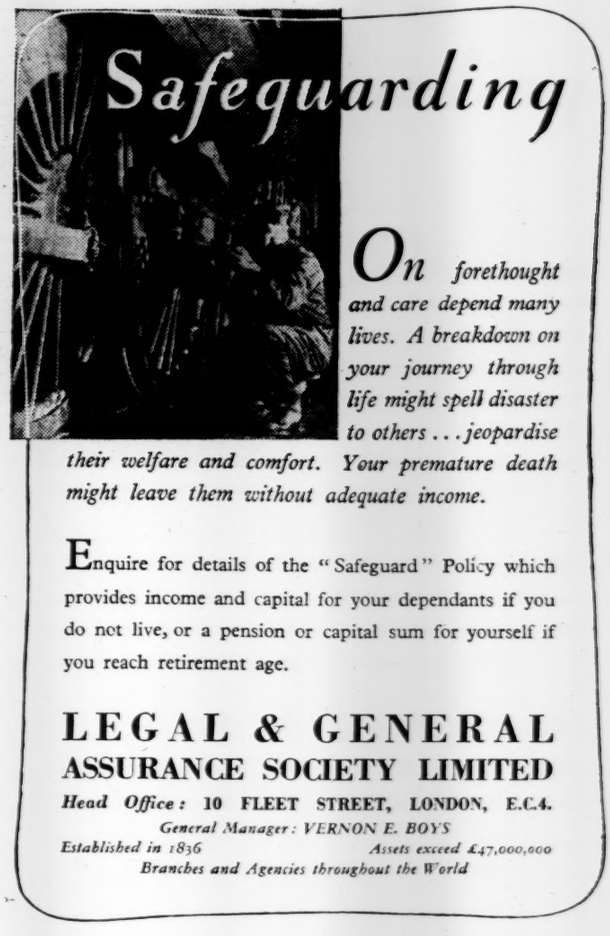
It was an upbringing few young men could have hoped to prevail against. But Mrs. John is able to show that the Prince Imperial, during the years of not very distinguished exile that followed his father's collapse at Sedan and his mother's abrupt and unadvertised retreat from the Tuileries (where she had announced that she would follow the example of her heroine, Marie Antoinette) remained singularly open-minded and singularly charming. He had none of the imbecile arrogance of most Pretenders. He died gallantly and unnecessarily—through fluke and mismanagement, abandoned by the English officer deputed to guard him. Mrs. John's long biography does him more than justice. It is an extremely readable book and makes an exhaustive survey of its subject-matter; but it is not improved by some touches of unfortunate slanginess. Orsini attempted to assassinate Napoleon III. To be more precise, he attempted to blow him up. Try to "bump him off" was something he certainly didn't do!

PETER QUENNELL

MORIBUND CIVILISATIONS

A Study of History. By ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE. Vols. IV, V and VI. *Oxford Press.* £3 10s. Vols. I-VI, £6 2s. 6d.

The first three volumes of Professor Toynbee's work dealt with the growth of civilisations and were published five years ago. The three volumes now published deal with the breakdown and disintegration of civilisations. There can be no dispute as to its being a very remarkable book. For the reader who likes large-scale historical speculation it is fascinating; for the serious student of human societies it provides an almost inexhaustible field for thought and controversy; to the humble reviewer it is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intimidating. Faced by Professor Toynbee the reviewer feels as a Lilliputian must have felt when he tried to look up into the face of Gulliver or as a minnow looking into the mouth of a pike. Everything about the *Study of History*, except its title, is on a colossal scale. Its range is oecumenical, to use a favourite word with the author; its bulk and appetite Gargantuan. Most books of giant size are like those giant stars whose weight is in inverse proportion to their dimensions; they are so big because there is nothing very much in them. No one could say that about Professor Toynbee; the mass and weight of thought and learning in every page of his book are enormous. It is this massive omniscience which makes it seem particularly indecent to criticise him; one feels that a man who knows everything about everything must be right. And Professor Toynbee does really seem, as an historian, to know everything about everything. There is no period or place in the history of the human race during the last 7,939 years of which he has not got an intimate and detailed knowledge. If at a venture you set him down in any Asiatic, African, European or American village in, say, the year 1939 B.C., he would be able to tell the inhabitants everything about their history, government, customs, wars, military equipment and strategy, religion, art and literature, and we should not be surprised if he were able to do it in their own language.

This enormous range and scope combined with immense detail in illustration give the work its peculiar quality. Read simply as a survey of human history it is fascinating and extremely stimulating. The themes, theses, or theories, taken in isolation, are often of the greatest interest and value, e.g. the thirty-five pages on the history of military equipment and strategy in Vol. IV. A work of this nature, however, challenges criticism as a whole and not merely in its several parts, and it is when the reviewer takes up this challenge that he begins to feel intimidated, for he can no longer honestly confine himself to cries of hosanna and he has to disagree with Professor Toynbee. The more one reads his book the more doubtful one becomes of the legitimacy of his general method and the soundness of his general conclusions. In both cases our doubt is due to an element in Professor Toynbee's thought which seems to be growing on him. It is a curious form of mysticism. In his first volume Professor Toynbee remarked that "while analogy is a vastly suggestive and significant pointer, we cannot afford to follow its indications blindly and mechanically." In the method which he uses for the investigation of social phenomena he again and again forgets his own warning; he forgets that while analogy is suggestive and may lead us to see significant facts which might have escaped our notice had we not noticed the analogy, mere "likeness" between one series of facts and another series is no evidence of any causal relation between the two series or of identity between the causal relations in the one series and those in another. He carries this analogical method to such lengths that again and again, beginning with a suggestive simile or metaphor, he ends by accepting the metaphor as proof of identity which, in fact, is extremely doubtful and which could only be established by a careful analysis of a large number of complicated historical facts. An example will show what we mean. Professor Toynbee is very fond of comparing the phenomena observable in the growth or disintegration of civilisations to the phenomena observable in radiation or in the diffusion or diffraction of light. On page 57 of Vol. IV and page 199 of Vol. V he assumes an almost exact identity in the nature of the "radiation" of a civilisation and of "radiation" in the physical world, and he takes this hypothetical and certainly non-existent identity as *a priori* proof that "a widely and rapidly expanding society will prove to be a disintegrating society." In the second of the two passages referred to the analogical or metaphorical method is so exaggerated that it reads almost like a caricature of itself. The method itself comes from a dangerous and subtle form of mysticism which has been widespread in all ages. It makes it possible for us to prove and to believe almost anything. One of the best-known examples of its use was the proof of a whole cosmogony and religion from the analogy of a watch.

It is the same kind of mysticism which makes a large part of Professor Toynbee's general conclusions unacceptable and often unintelligible to the non-mystic. To deal with this point at length in a short review is out of the question; it is only possible to try to indicate the main line of our disagreement. The essence of mysticism is a claim that the existence of a belief is proof of its truth. Unless we have completely misunderstood him, Professor Toynbee—to judge from his sixth volume—believes not only in the general truth of Christianity, but in the literal truth of the story of Christ as recorded in the gospels. In the same sphere, he believes much more than this, as is shown by such remarks—apparently serious—as that "the life of a demigod is not so precious as the life of a god of unalloyed divinity"; or by the apparently serious discussion of the paternity of Jesus. Some of the discussions in this sixth volume leave the non-mystic mute and staggered with astonishment. They imply an attitude towards "truth" and "facts" which, it seems to us, Professor Toynbee the historian would himself regard with suspicion, if not ridicule. Yet they form the basis of his main conclusions with regard to the growth and disintegration of civilisations and the meaning of human history.

LEONARD WOOLF

THE AMERICAN COLLECTOR

Masterpieces of European Painting in America. Edited by PROFESSOR HANS TIETZE. 317 reproductions. *Allen and Unwin.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

It seems that the West is bound to plunder the more civilised East. In buying masterpieces of European art the Americans were conforming to the same instinct which led the Crusaders to sack Constantinople and the English milords to ransack Italy. These acts of depredation are often deplored, but my sympathies are with the barbarians. The institutions and individuals of the older civilisations which sold their works of art were not usually forced to do so; often they were almost as rich as the purchasers. Looking through Dr. Tietze's book we find that many of the great pictures which have passed from this country to America were sold by English millionaires to Americans whose fortunes, if more spectacular, are less solid. Evidently there comes a time when a governing class prefers money to splendid or beautiful possessions (probably this is a sign of waning confidence in creative ability) and collections are regarded as potential sources of wealth, like stocks and shares, to be sold when the broker advises.

People collect pictures for mixed motives, just as they look at them with mixed feelings, but we cannot console ourselves with the old sneer that the Americans collect solely in order to display their riches and to force a way into society. Nearly all the great American collectors have a genuine appetite for painting, and considerable power of discrimination. This is most clearly seen in the superb series of nineteenth-century French pictures which is one of the triumphs of American collecting. Mrs. Havemeyer bought Degas and Manet in the last century when very few people in this country had heard of them. Dr. Barnes bought his first Cézannes and Renoirs in 1906, and has continued to buy them with such remarkable insight that his collection is the only place where these two painters can be properly understood. The only Seurat in a French public collection was presented to the Luxembourg by an American. All the great Matisses which are not in Moscow are in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Earlier schools of painting are well or ill represented in America in indirect ratio to the esteem in which they were held in Europe during the nineteenth century. For example, sixteenth-century Italy is only represented by two or three really great works—Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* from Alnwick, Titian's *Rape of Europa*, the Cowper Madonnas of Raphael. Paul Veronese is hardly represented at all. The minor Dutch masters of the seventeenth century had been collected by German princelings in the eighteenth and English bankers in the nineteenth centuries, so that there is nothing in America to compare with the Peel collection in the National Gallery or the Baring collection at Buckingham Palace. A few recently discovered Vermeers have crossed the Atlantic, but the *mot d'ordre* that every great collection must have its Vermeer has led to some damaged and dubious examples being given prominence. It is unfortunate that Dr. Tietze does not reproduce the wonderful *Woman with a feather hat* from the Mellon collection instead of the two button-eyed girls on pp. 188 and 190. But if the minor Dutchmen are weak, Rembrandt is the old master best seen in America. His sumptuosity and glowing effects of artificial light warm the millionaire's heart, and he is to be found in the dining rooms of less discriminating collectors, as well as in the carefully chosen galleries of Mr. Widener and the late Andrew Mellon. Since the Hermitage has been broken up Rembrandt will be better represented in the new National Gallery at Washington than anywhere in Europe. It is perhaps an indication of American taste, rather than of availability, that two of the greatest seventeenth-century painters, Rubens and Poussin, are poorly represented.

So much for the merits of American collecting. The attendant absurdities are beyond the range of satire. The natural ignorance

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PUTNAM

and vanity of collectors has been studied by art-dealers and systematised into an elaborate code which would delight a student of folklore. For example, all painters are represented as having their good and bad periods, and to buy an early Gainsborough would be like buying an out-of-date automobile. Certain painters can only be bought when they introduce specified motives—a dog, a baby, a red scarf, etc. Then there is the difficulty that in order to sell a picture in America it must be by a known artist, and this has led to the appearance of the expert who is paid to attribute pictures to lucrative masters. Fortunately the multiplication of fake expertises, like the fake relics of the Middle Ages, has led to a certain degree of scepticism, so that I have seen pictures attributed to Raphael and Giorgione, with certificates by almost every expert in Europe, which not even the vendors have taken seriously. More dangerous is the question of repaint to which the Americans were until recently curiously insensitive. The experts who guaranteed genuineness never mentioned purity of condition, and there are many famous pictures in America which, even if they were once by the painter in question, are now so completely repainted as to be more or less new.

Both in the matter of attribution and repaint Dr. Tietze has made a judicious choice, although I doubt if anyone to-day would attribute the Griggs Crucifixion (p. 41) to Masolino, and it was a mistake to select *After the Theatre* (p. 269) when the question of Daumier forgeries is still under discussion. When it comes to English painting, Dr. Tietze, like all Continental scholars, is lost. Instead of reproducing one of the two fine genuine Turners from the Widener Collection, or the marvellous, crazy *Slave Ship* (Ruskin's favourite) from Boston, he gives us a poor imitation of Turner's worst Venetian manner. One of his Boningtons is no better. The greatest English picture in America, Constable's *Stoke by Nayland* in the Chicago Art Institute, is omitted, and instead we have a number of those idiotic portraits of pretty children which until recently formed one of our most satisfactory exports to the United States.

In general, the selection shows a real love of painting, though, like all anthologies, it must arouse a combative spirit in the reviewer. Sometimes I disagree on a matter of taste; for example, Dr. Tietze evidently likes the minor German portrait painters more than I do; but why include five Moronis and omit Mrs. Gardner's *Piero della Francesca* and Mr. Kress's *Domenico Veneziano*.

The notes and the introduction are adequate. What a subject there is for a long essay on the early history of American collecting. One remembers Henry James' delicate study of Hawthorne trying, like some saintly humanist, to come to terms with the pagan gods of the old world, and Mrs. Wharton's pathetic short story *False Dawn* inspired by the first man in America to collect primitives, James J. Jarves. Dr. Tietze has however produced one splendid quotation from the Diary of Edward Hicks the Quaker, writing in 1843: "Painting seems to me to be one of those arts which say nothing and signify nothing, which have never brought any real profit to mankind. But as the inseparable companion of lust and pride, it has foretold the fall of empires and kingdoms; and in my opinion it is now one of the warning signs of the rapid decline of the American Republic."

KENNETH CLARK

LIVING THOUGHTS

Nietzsche. By HEINRICH MANN. *Cassell.* 2s. 6d.
Thoreau. By THEODORE DREISER. *Cassell.* 2s. 6d.

This series aims at giving us, in small space, the ruling ideas of a number of thinkers, in their own words, arranged according to subject by competent and sympathetic editors. A short prefatory note puts the reader in possession of the essential facts in the thinker's life—his date, his country, and his main interests. We are thus enabled to assess his debt to his predecessors and the debt of his followers to him, and to know beforehand, in a measure, what we are to expect from the selections in the succeeding pages. A criticism by the editor, covering twenty or thirty pages, comes next; and then we are left to make direct contact with the "living thoughts."

I prefer the word "thinker" to "philosopher," because many of these men, though their ideas are often profoundly suggestive, did not even intend to correlate them into a systematic "philosophy." This is eminently true, for instance, of Montaigne, who has probably been far more influential than Kant or Schopenhauer, but certainly made no attempt at system, and would have smiled, with gentle irony, if you had pointed out an inconsistency. The same is true even of Pascal, whose *Pensées* are detached, and are sometimes no more than sublime conjectures.

There are others in the list, like Descartes or Spinoza, who are essentially "philosophers." Their thoughts are not isolated; they are presented to us in the form of a chain, every link being firmly bound to the one which goes before. In the case of these, I take it that the aim of the editors will be to allure their readers to study the originals. In the case of others, this obligation is less imperative; the student will know them fairly well from the passages here set before him. Perhaps, now and then, the parts may prove better than the wholes: the selectors have chosen the best.

The two writers whom we have now specially to consider are good examples of their peculiar kinds. Nietzsche, who is introduced to us by Heinrich Mann in a very able prefatory essay, certainly *meant* to be a philosopher; whether he became one is another question. Many years ago, when, on the advice of a German friend, I made my first acquaintance with him, I was, of course, struck with the amazing force of his style, with the uniquely provocative character of his paradoxes, and with his defiance of conventional ideas. Not even Carlyle had "the art of putting things" in so rich a measure. I think these qualities seemed to me most manifest in *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*, in the *Genealogie der Moral*, and in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*; and the effect, for the moment, was overwhelming. But it did not last: it was impossible to work these maxims into a unity. To speak mathematically, I could not discover the equation of this most erratic curve. Many of the statements appeared to be rather the utterances of prejudice than the products of sustained reasoning; and it was far from easy to reconcile one with another. For example, why was Wagner now exalted and now depreciated, and why, when there was so much in Nietzsche's theories that might form the basis of Prussianism, did he never disguise his hatred of Prussia? Silly sayings like this: "The victory of the good is regarded as a duty: this is English, and typical of that blockhead John Stuart Mill," were not of the kind to make one admire the sanity of Nietzsche's judgments.

I do not know that the reading of Herr Mann's essay and of

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these selections has materially altered this opinion. It is no doubt salutary that our conventional beliefs should receive some vigorous shocks; and many of them need correction; but on the whole they are right. One prefers to the glorification of the superman the saying of Talleyrand that, after all, there is something greater and wiser than Napoleon—" c'est tout le monde." At the same time, in order that we may hold our views more rationally, we cannot do better than study the assault of so able an enemy as Nietzsche. We shall probably think there must be something in them if they arouse such violent denunciation.

Thoreau, who never thought of himself as a philosopher, is almost the opposite of Nietzsche. He teaches contentment with little, and, if a rebel, rebels against the tyranny of Mammon. Our real needs are few; satisfy them, and Nature will supply the rest. Each man ought to be sufficient to himself, and, so far from needing a superman to rule him, can almost do without government altogether.

Most people know Thoreau solely from *Walden*, and these will be astonished at the wealth of practical wisdom which Mr. Theodore Dreiser has been able to gather from the two million words of Thoreau's writing which he has read in order to make this selection. " It is as if some god who was alive at the beginning of the world should break through in Thoreau, and remember something of what Nature's mind is." It is true that, as Mr. Dreiser says, Thoreau seems to begin with concrete, somewhat ordinary observation, and to end in " vaporous profundity." The time came when he could not express his ideas, and his words became therefore confused. But, when we *do* penetrate into his meaning, it is generally worth the labour: and Mr. Dreiser, by taking enormous trouble himself, has saved us a great deal.

E. E. KELLETT

The People's War. By I. EPSTEIN. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Here we have the first full account by a newspaper correspondent of the hostilities in China. The eye witness pictures he gives of the fighting are graphic and moving, and his account of the massacres perpetrated by the Japanese are first-hand evidence which should arouse an indifferent world. More care in the arrangement of his material and a more critical outlook would, however, have made this book more valuable to anyone wishing to appraise China's strength and weakness, and her chances of survival.

Mr. Epstein wears his political beliefs upon his sleeve and, although he does not appear to have visited the North West, he constantly reverts to the exploits of the Eighth Route army, and to conditions under the United Front Border Government of Shansi, Chahar and Hopei, whilst entirely omitting mention of the similar agrarian and administrative reforms carried out by the Kwangsi Generals in their south-western province. Interesting quotations are given from the accounts of other observers who have lived and travelled with the Eighth, and the new Fourth, Route armies and whose books are soon to be published.

Mr. Epstein is perhaps a little too easily satisfied that substantial democratic liberties are already firmly established in China, and is naive in his appraisal of the political situation and of China's social and military problems. For instance he asserts that " the working class has won back its freedom of organisation," although it is well known that strikers are liable to the death penalty and that only Kuomintang Trade Unions are permitted to exist. Like so many Communist sympathisers he wants to have his cake and eat it. He quotes the Chinese Communists as saying: " the intensification of social strife at this juncture might throw the propertied classes into the camp of peace," and as advocating " the co-operation of all classes in the interests of the war "; he makes a point of the fact that Communist co-operation with the Kuomintang is to continue after the war; yet all who say that there has been any change in Communist policy since the days when the Comintern advocated co-operation with the Kuomintang only as the preliminary step to social revolution and the establishment of a Soviet system, are liars, Trotskyists, renegades, Fascists and what not. The Chinese Communists themselves are honest enough to admit that the class war has been abandoned lest China be deprived by Japan of any territory in which sovereignty is held by a Chinese government of any kind.

My Father Was a Gentleman. By ROBERT HOLMES. *Longmans.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This book stands out from a plethora of reminiscence because it is such an excellent example of the book which, by popular supposition, every man has it in him to write. The story that the gentleman whose pseudonym is Robert Holmes has to tell is little different from those of a thousand others of his generation, yet he writes with so sure a command of language that he achieves a document of ordinariness which is highly pleasurable to read. Mr. Holmes enlisted soon after leaving school, served in France, and was invalided out of the army with a bayonet wound. After his recovery he found himself completely lacking any equipment for the competitive labour market, and there ensued long spells of demoralisation on the dole, varied by temporary jobs and wearisome quests for work, until by a stroke of luck he gained

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an entry into the second-hand motor trade. The three-quarters of his book devoted to this racket are illuminating. Few purchasers of used cars have the slightest knowledge of what goes on behind the scenes in this branch of the industry, and Mr. Holmes's revelations, together with his entertaining character sketches, are sure to interest a large public. Sometimes he made as much as thirty pounds a week; sometimes nothing at all. He reveals himself in this book as a genial personality with no strong beliefs or disbeliefs, fond of conviviality, opportunist, and rather sentimental.

BOOKS TO COME

With the minimum of fuss and delay, publishers have now settled down to the business of the autumn publishing season. Indeed, owing to the unavoidable postponement of dates in September, many of the October lists will be even longer than usual. Certain publishers who removed to the country on the outbreak of war have returned to London on discovering that business was likely to be brisk. Among these are Messrs. Methuen who found that the demand for their books was exceptionally heavy during the first week of the War.

M. Boris Souvarine's *Stalin*, to be published by Secker and Warburg on September 25th, seems likely to be the book of the moment. Souvarine was formerly a leading official of the French Communist Party and a member of the Executive of the Communist International. His book is at once a full-length portrait of Stalin and a critical analysis of Bolshevism from the point of view of a progressive who is hostile both to Stalinism and Trotskyism. Hailed in America as an extraordinarily penetrating piece of contemporary historical research, it exhibits Stalin's strange personality as a major factor not only in Soviet politics but also in world history and throws much light on the recent startling developments of Soviet policy.

The same firm will publish at the beginning of October, Thorstein Veblen's *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution*, a remarkable study of the divergences between the cultural development of the English and German peoples which was first published in America directly after the War, is now more than ever pertinent, but has long been out of print.

Mr. Duff Cooper has changed the title of a volume of his recent speeches and articles to be published by Cape on September 29th from *The Anxious Year* to *The Second World War*. The contents are linked together in a narrative which shows the course of events as they have impressed the author since his resignation of his position as First Lord of the Admiralty.

A topical book which seems likely to be refreshing is due from Hamish Hamilton in the first week of October. It is *Right Honourable Gentlemen*, a series of frank biographies of our leading statesmen by a writer whose pseudonym is "Watchman." Mr. Hamilton says that these racy portraits, whose sitters include Chamberlain, Halifax, Churchill, Simon, Eden and Duff Cooper, recall "Ephesian's" *The Mirrors of Downing Street*.

From Messrs. Constable, whose autumn publishing season is now in full swing, comes on September 22nd *Cruisers in Battle* by Hector Bywater, a record of the part played by British and German light cruisers in the naval operations in the Great War. The author has had at his disposal diaries, letters and other personal documents belonging to British and German officers. Constable is publishing on the same day a revised edition, with a new preface, of Ramsay Muir's *Expansion of Europe*, and on September 27th a novel by Hilda Reid, *Ashley Hamel*, which is the story of a parish from the time of the French Revolution to the present day.

On September 29th, the Cambridge University Press will publish the authorised life of Lord Rutherford by his friend, Dr. A. S. Eve, formerly Macdonald Professor of Physics at McGill University. The fullest use has been made of Lord Rutherford's personal documents and wherever possible his own words have been used in the form of quotations from letters, lectures, speeches, books and papers. The biography is designed to give a complete picture of Rutherford as a man and an accurate account of his scientific achievement.

Red Pilot, a book by a military pilot of the Red Army who escaped with a brother airman from Soviet Russia last year and landed in Esthonia, is to be published by Hurst and Blackett on September 28th. The author, Lieutenant Vladimir Unishevsky, describes the circumstances which drove them to flight, the methods of the Ogpu and what he regards as the industrial chaos of contemporary Russia.

It's Too Late Now is the title of A. A. Milne's autobiography to be published by Methuen on September 28th. The book is divided into seven sections covering the author's life as child, schoolboy, undergraduate, free-lance, assistant editor, amateur soldier and author. On the same day, Methuen publishes a new book by Professor Oman on *Writing of History* and a volume of Belloc's sea essays, *On Sailing the Sea*, which also contains passages from *The Cruise of the Nona*.

A life of John Nicholson, *The Hero of Delhi*, by Hesketh Pearson, is coming from Collins on September 25th. Using contemporary documents for his information, Mr. Pearson has found one of his most valuable sources in an unpublished book by a certain Major Angelo who served under Nicholson in the Mutiny.

In *More Portraits of a Lifetime*, 1918–1938, M. Jacques-Émile Blanche continues his brilliant survey of the intellectual and social life of his time. In this volume he is concerned to draw a contrast between the French and English life of the period, to analyse artistic movements like Dadaism and Surrealism and to record his impressions of contemporaries such as D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Diaghileff, Katherine Mansfield, Delius, Cocteau and Augustus John.

The Hogarth Press announce that they intend to carry out their autumn programme as originally planned. On September 25th they are publishing Volume II of Leonard Woolf's great study of communal psychology, *After the Deluge*. Part I was mainly concerned with democracy and democratic psychology in general as they developed in the eighteenth century and the American and French Revolutions. The present volume deals with their further development in England and France, in the Reform crisis and the revolution of 1830.

On the same date, the Hogarth Press will publish *Party Going*, a new novel by Harry Green, author of the highly original novel, *Living*, published ten years ago—this time his subject is not the industrial workers of the Midlands but the idle rich in Mayfair; *Co-education* by L. B. Pekin; and a long poem by Joan Adeney Easdale, *Amber Innocent*.

In his new volume of cultural history, *The Victorian Age*, coming from Harrap on September 28th, Professor R. B. Mowat confines himself to the period 1840–80. A specially interesting feature is a section of five chapters mainly devoted to American events and trends.

MARIE SCOTT-JAMES

Week-end Competitions

No. 501

Set by T. W. Earp

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No. 502

Set by William Whitebait

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RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Sept. 29th.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 497

Set by Alfred W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) for characteristically English reactions to the War. Example: On Sunday morning at 11.20 in Russell Square, a cyclist in an unidentifiable uniform stopped on seeing some people filling sandbags, and remarked, "I don't know if you know, or would be interested to know, but England is now at war with Germany."

Report by Alfred W. Stonier

There was a large entry for this competition. In spite of "and, my dear, I haven't taken off my corsets since" (G. de Vavasour) it confirms the traditional view that the English react to a crisis by keeping cool. Thus a London bus-conductor is quoted, from the last war, as saying, "If we've got to die now, let us die quiet" (Sir St. Clair Thomson).

But resignation seems by no means the whole matter. For English people the War is not a natural disaster or the decree of a God-state. It is an unwarrantable interference by Herr Hitler with their private lives, and they react by asserting their independence in one way or another. Entries range for the most part from lofty political comment or irreverent jokes to disdain and "what shall I do about it?" Here are some of the more amusing anecdotes:

"What a lot we have to thank Mr. Chamberlain for, God bless him! Look what he has done for us!" (Gertrude Roach.)

"'Coo, won't Hitler be cross!" (B. Kemp.)

"Fancy declaring war during church hours!" (Harry Bloom.)

"Lovely day! Isn't this war annoying?" (R. S. Jaffray.)

Mother of Evacuee: "Blimey! Is this bloomin' caper going on all through the winter?" (P. E. A.)

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to all readers of this paper

Periodicals are usually sold to newsagents on terms which allow them to obtain credit from the publishers for unsold copies returned.

From October 9th, following a resolution of the Periodical Proprietors Association, this "on sale or return" arrangement will be suspended.

As a result, newsagents will order with greater caution, and unless readers place a definite order for their periodicals to be delivered or reserved, they may frequently find themselves disappointed.

The Publisher of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will be glad to be informed of the exact circumstances if any reader orders this journal in advance and fails to obtain regular and prompt delivery.

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10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1

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AWAY FROM IT ALL! We still have rooms left at the Webley Hotel, Poppit Sands, near Cardigan, West Wales. Miles from anywhere except the open sea. All modern appointments: sun lounge, Slumberland beds. £5 5*s*. weekly. Write or telephone: Cardigan 135.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates and all information on page 443

ACCOMMODATION
To Let

HAMPSTEAD. Furnished single room. Comfortable. Hot water. Reasonable. 18 Belsize Avenue, N.W.3. PRI. 6724.

TEMPORARY Furnished Rooms to Let at 23 Taviton St., W.C.1, from a Guinea weekly, with service. Write MISS A. H. MAHONY.

DIVAN Bed-sitting rooms; h. & c., including breakfast, 25*s*. weekly. 80 Maida Vale, W.9. MAI. 1930.

BUTTER, NO GUNS. Before the Air Raids start, or after, come to peace, quiet, happiness in beautiful old house in Neutral Ireland. Wonderful surroundings in Ireland's most beautiful County Wicklow. Ideal for writers, composers, and others wishing to work undisturbed by noise or crisis. Plenty of the very best food. Easy reach of Dublin. Kilmacurra Park, Kilbride, Wicklow, Eire.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH. Divan bed-sitting rooms, h. and c., central heating, breakfast, use kitchen and dining room, quiet, from 23*s*. 6*d*. HAM. 3288. Write 21 Pond Street, N.W.3.

BELSIZE PARK. Attractive bed-sitting rooms. Good food; reasonable prices. Apply in evening. SHIPHAM, 44 Glenloch Road, N.W.3.

122 EBURY STREET. SLO. 1007. Bed-sitting rooms. Divans. Hot and cold basins. Breakfast. Service.

BACHELOR ROOM. Near British Museum. 15*s*. Suit teacher, journalist. Write BM/BCGX, W.C.1.

DIVAN RMS. Every comfort; h. and c., etc. Cheap. 94 Warwick Way, S.W.1.

BED-SITTING room. Westminster. Good address. Modernised, redecorated house, very quiet. Luxurious divan; h. and c. water, electric fire, hotplate, light. Inclusive light and really hot baths, 25*s*. weekly. Meals if desired. Box 6021.

A.R.P. Unconventional atmosphere, large garden. P.G.s taken, moderate. 'Phone Walton-on-Thames 909.

W.C.1. Clean as a new pin are the rooms at 7 Mecklenburgh Street. Furnished bed-sitting-rooms from 16*s*. 6*d*. Ter. 4821.

INTERESTING old house has furnished divan room with attendance, 15*s*.; or flatlet. Enf. 2709.

WEST SUSSEX. Primitive but adequate accommodation; tent, cabin, 3 acres copse. 10*s*. weekly, period. Box 5858.

SAFE Area, Surrey Hills. Comfortable home for two children, preferably girls, as paying guests. Write Box 6039.

HOUSES, FLATS, PROPERTY, Etc.
For Sale and To Let

ASHDOWN FOREST. 8 miles Haywards Heath. Small furnished house to let, 7 rooms. Modern conveniences. Electricity. Garden produce. 4 *guineas* or near offer. Box 6024.

BUY a cottage. 3 rooms and water. Essex, £175; Wilts, £300. APPELBE, 7 New Sq., W.C.2.

STUDLAND, DORSET. To Let, furn., 6 rm. cottage, el., water, large garden. £2 wk. Oct., less for long let. On bus route. Box 6015.

HAMPSTEAD. Self-contained flats with full domestic service to let in reinforced concrete building; particularly safe situation. Furnished or unfurnished. Special short leases for Evacuation widowers. Furnished: 12 *guineas* for four weeks. Unfurnished: £65 for 6 months, £35 for three months. One double flat also available. Full domestic service; constant hot water and central heating. Full meal service if required. Cheerful club room for refuge during air raids. SECRETARY, Isokon, Lawn Road Flats, N.W.3. Primrose 6054.

CITY (Nr.). Mod. bldg., 2–3 rms. Flats. Kit., bthrm. From 27*s*. 6*d*. p.w. CYRIL LEONARD AND CO., Angel House, Angel, N.1. Ter. 2413.

WEST END (few minutes). 2 rms., kit. and bthrm. flats. Lift, carpeted corridors, mod. bldg., res. caretaker. From 30*s*. p.w. CYRIL LEONARD AND CO., Angel House, Angel, N.1. Ter. 2413.

FLATS, A.R.P. Shelter. Highbury, 2, 3 and 4 rms. Flats, kit., bthrm. From £91 p.a. Cent. htg., hot water, mod. bldg. CYRIL LEONARD AND CO., Angel House, Angel, N.1. Ter. 2413.

HIGHBURY. Superior fur. flat, 3 r., k., b., in mod. bldg. Hot water, cen. htg., A.R.P. Shelter. Apply CYRIL LEONARD AND CO., Angel House, Angel, N.1. Ter. 2413.

W.1, Nr. Oxf. St., Tott. Ct. Rd. 3 rms., kit. recess and bath, converted hse., large rms., new, rt. £95 p.a., incl. CYRIL LEONARD AND CO., Angel House, Angel, N.1. Ter. 2413.

CHELSEA—best position. Upper part to let in private house, September. Three to four rooms, moderate rent. Constant hot water. Box 5795.

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CHARITY

FACTORY GIRLS' COUNTRY HOLIDAY FUND. Chairman, Lady Loch. FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED for Convalescent Cases now and throughout the Winter. Gifts thankfully acknowledged by the HON. TREASURER, or MISS CANNEY, M.B.E., 36 Red Lion Street, Bedford Row, W.C.1.

"That settles it, Tommy. You'll go straight away and take your guinea-pigs out of the air-raid shelter." (Allan M. Laing.)

"Well, I think I'll just go and look at me comics." (J. H. Hammett.)

From Scotland: "'The war's on,' whispered the beadle. 'Yes, that's all right,' said the minister, and pronounced the Benediction." (Rev. H. R. Ferrie.)

"Oh, never mind about the baby—the Government will take care of *him*—it's the dog *I'm* worrying about." (Grete Green.)

A first prize of 30*s.* goes to J. A. Downes for a representative bundle. The second prize (22*s.* 6*d.*) is divided between Alan R. Thomas for his wicked grocer and Ellen Evans for a grotesque.

FIRST PRIZE

The Workman: Come and 'ave one with me; don't you know there's a bloody war on.

His Wife: I wish I'd got 'im in our backyard. I'd soon settle 'im.

His Mother: Ain't 'e got a cheek; why 'e ain't even a king.

His Father: If our time's come, it's come, that's what I say: and going to church won't do no good.

His Daughter (a social climber): I got the dinkiest little bag for my gas mask at Bumble and Bumbles, and only half-a-crown.

Her Young Man: Mind you, I think it's about time we gave these Germans a lesson, but I don't hold with this shutting of the pictures; I reckon that's going too far.

Her City Employer: Oh, I knew the Empire would see us through; after all, it's just like mother and daughter, you know. And you mark my words, America will be in before you know where you are.

His Wife: Well, my dear, we must all keep our chins up, you know. Not that *we* shall run short of anything, but as I always say, it is the example that you set the other people. J. A. DOWNES

SECOND PRIZE (1)

Shortly after 11.15, Sunday morning, September 3rd. The solemn voice from the loud speaker in the back-kitchen. "... it is the evil things we shall be fighting against—brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution—and against them I am certain that the right will prevail."

The little Grocer and General Dealer sniffed.

"Me very own words!"

Then he went into the shop at the front. He altered the German Sausage to "Luncheon Sausage," and the price of Best Quality, High-Class Drawing Pins from a penny to threepence a box.

ALAN R. THOMAS

SECOND PRIZE (2)

Conversation overheard on village bus:

Old Woman: I never was one for politics, but from what I can make out, this 'ere 'Itler wants Poland. 'E ought to be strangled.

Old Man (mysteriously): It's not 'Itler no more than it was the Kayser. It's Them.

Old Woman: Well, all I can say is, I 'ope I've not lost my return ticket. ELLEN EVANS

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 498

Set by Dr. Gourlay

How many of us can remember our first lie? We offer the usual prizes for the most revealing and unexpected example, which should if possible be true.

Report

This was rather a difficult competition—for anyone determined to tell the truth. One's *first* lie: how difficult to spot at the end of vistas of lying! But competitors have either excellent memories or most convincing powers of invention. "I was going to be three," begins R. S. Jaffray, and others not quite so sure of early dates invoke the testimony of older relatives. Some anecdotes ring truer than others; and it is always difficult, in judging a competition of this sort, to decide whether genuineness—apparent genuineness—or vivacity deserves most marks. Most of us remember incidents of bed-wetting, one's first cigarette, stolen pears, or broken crockery, about which (quite uselessly) we lied. Such incidents, though popular with contributors, are often a little flat. I liked best of these what David Freeman calls the "silent lie": this is the moment when nurse or parent has bent over the bed murmuring "Are you asleep?" and the child keeps his eyes shut tight without answering. We have all experienced that—some of us later in life, too. Before giving the winners, I should like to quote runners-up:

My mother (in shocked surprise): "*What* did you say?"

Myself aged four (terrified but retaining some presence of mind): "Butter." (CHARLES PUGMIRE)

My first lie that I definitely recollect telling was at the age of about eight in 1933.

Hitler was then just coming into power and I, on seeing his photograph for the first time in the paper, immediately exclaimed "Oh! what a nice, kind-looking man!" This is quite true.

(MARGARET RUBINSTEIN)

"I didn't do it: the hot-water bottle leaks."

(MAURICE CRANSTON)

It was September, 1892, in Essex and I was soon going to be three. On my first visit to a farm, I was enjoying the gathering of apples from the orchard grass. From one of these emerged my first wasp, and it stung my hand as I squashed it. My mother made the usual enquiry, to which I replied "No, I hurted *him!*"

(R. S. JAFFRAY)

How old must a child be to achieve enough moral conscience to tell a lie? Anyhow, tradition in my family (I remember nothing of it myself) has it that once, when I was between three and four, the doctor asked me to put out my tongue. Disliking the idea, I am reported to have answered briefly: "Can't. I've swallowed it."

(ALLAN M. LAING)

I find it hard not to give some of these a share of the prizes. On the whole, though, I think Augustine, Maud Gill and G. Green deserve best, and I recommend that the prizes be divided equally between the three.

(1)

At the age of four I had a passion for pretty clothes, and was anxious to display the glories of my new frilly, lacy knickers—or *drawers*, as they were still, uncompromisingly, called.

We chanced to meet the Vicar, whereupon I whipped up my frock and piped with pride "Frills, Mr. Entwhistle, frills!"

"But you must never show them to gentlemen," reproved the blushing bachelor kindly, but Margaret must never, under any circumstances, be put in the wrong. "Oh, that's all right," I said airily, "My Mummy *always* does!"

My embarrassed parent endorses my vague memory of this incident.

G. GREEN

(2)

In the night nursery, where I slept in a cot, beside the beds of the older children, there hung on the wall opposite an oil painting of a girl crossing stepping-stones over a brook. When lights were out the elder children would relate in whispers the stirring (and mostly imaginary) adventures that they had met with during the day. I had met with no adventures. I felt at a decided disadvantage. So, I told the first lie that I remember. With bated breath I declared that before the other children had come to bed, I had seen the girl in the picture move from her usual stepping-stone to the next one. I must have lied with conviction. My hearers were awed. The eldest arose, carried a nightlight to the picture to verify my statement, but none of them could remember exactly on which stepping-stone the girl had originally stood. We went to sleep at last in miserable perturbation, the other children from fear of the abnormal, I from horror at the effect I had produced. Retribution overtook me immediately. From that moment I lived in dread that I might really see the girl in the picture move. I knew that I should go mad with terror if I did see such a phenomenon. As far as my memory takes me, I honestly believe that I lived in dread of such a happening for several years. Yet I preferred this perpetual state of terror to the simple, yet humiliating expedient of confessing that I had told a lie. MAUD GILL

(3)

MEA CULPA

I can remember my first lie fairly well, partly because it was in the nature of a sacrilege (I am a Catholic) and partly because it dealt with an egg-cup, which plays an important part in my life, as I am very fond of eggs.

I was making my First Confession. It was pitch dark inside the Confession Box, and I was so frightened that when the priest (he was very cross) asked me what sins I had committed I couldn't think of a single one, though my mother had made a list of suitable ones for me. I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't remembered that the boy in the adjoining box, whose confession I had overheard, had accused himself of stealing an egg-cup.

So, I said that I, too, had stolen an egg-cup.

I was seven years old at the time: that is the age at which Catholic boys make their First Confession; you see, you have come to distinguish between right and wrong at that age, and that makes my lie all the more serious. AUGUSTINE

ORDEALS
you can help them face

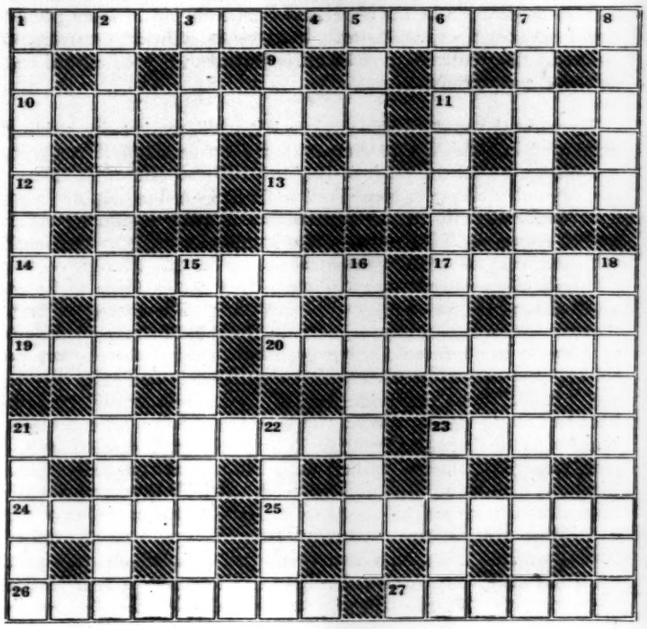
Over 66,000 lives have been saved from shipwreck round our shores in the last 115 years.
Your help in this heroic work is needed.
It costs little more than one penny a year from each one of our population. Anything you can afford to send will help these brave men in their perilous task.

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION

LIFE-BOAT HOUSE, 42, Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W.1
The EARL OF HARROWBY, Hon. Treasurer.
Lt.-Col. C. R. SATTERTHWAITE, O.B.E., Secretary.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 498

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss Harris, 45 Fairfield Lane, Barrow-in-Furness

ACROSS

1. Reputation sought in charging the guns. (6)
4. It would be the standing dish. (8)
10. Decadent description of featherweights? (9)
11. Countrified Russian river. (5)
12. Maurois's life of Shelley. (5)
13. Dry up! (9)
14. A vessel of small tonnage no doubt. (9)
17. Me a B.A.? Quite otherwise. (5)
19. Ibsen narrates it in part. (5)
20. Led astray — by being proselytised? (9)
21. Poise-nous people. (9)
23. Those who do obviously end by breaking the law. (5)
24. A letter on stockings. (5)
25. Can I get into the final? (9)
26. Leave the rent outside. (8)
27. Such people need stuffing. (6)

DOWN

1. Bed spreads go on them of course. (9)
2. Gives one an over record, figuratively speaking. (15)
3. It takes an age returning as a learner driver. (5)
5. Steer into the wood. (5)
6. Bird the wheatear listens for? (9)
7. Father Neptune does this merely by water. (15)
8. Let us go to the hill in London. (5)
9. No doubt an ironclad. (8)
15. Does it play for passengers on the line? (9)
16. What Blondel sang in his search for Richard. (8)
18. "The Old Lady shows her Medals" for instance — at golf. (9)
21. Or is South Africa attached to it in India? (5)
22. The squirrel finds it buried. (5)
23. But an African is. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

B	A	C	K	G	A	T	E	■	S	T	R	A	N	D
U	■	H	■	O	■	R	■	■	O	■	R	■	I	■
C	L	A	S	S	W	A	R	■	S	M	A	C	K	S
K	■	I	■	P	■	D	■	■	A	■	H	■	S	■
L	E	S	S	E	N	E	D	■	T	H	R	I	V	E
E	■	E	■	L	■	W	■	A	■	A	■	V	■	C
■	■	■	■	■	W	I	N	D	O	W	S	E	A	T
S	■	S	■	C	■	N	■	D	■	K	■	S	■	S
P	A	T	T	E	R	D	A	L	E	■	■	■	■	■
O	■	A	■	R	■	S	■	E	■	O	■	T	■	R
N	O	I	S	E	S	■	E	D	E	N	T	A	T	E
G	■	R	■	B	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	H	■	C
O	N	W	A	R	D	■	E	G	G	W	H	I	S	K
I	■	A	■	A	■	■	■	G	■	A	■	T	■	O
D	R	Y	F	L	Y	■	A	S	S	Y	R	I	A	N

For cleaning Silver Electro Plate &c
"Goddard's" Plate Powder 6d 1/- & 2/-
Liquid Polish 9d & 1/3

'The best and most reliable recipe for return to normality is reading'—C. E. M. Joad in last week's 'New Statesman.'

An interesting choice of books simply arranged. Selection is easy and intelligent help at hand.
(Send for list if out of town)

HEYWOOD HILL'S BOOKSHOP, 17 CURZON STREET,
Mayfair 0647-8 (almost opposite the Curzon Cinema) London, W.1

PERSONAL

WOULD anyone offer work or hospitality to Polish student? Urgent. LOM, 6 Anson Road, Manchester, 14.

RETIRED lady desires companion share bungalow. Elect., bath. WILLETT, "Westerly," Faversham Road, Seasalter, Whitstable.

BOARD-RESIDENCE offered sunbathers. 100% sheltered seclusion. Special terms to domesticated girl. Box 6017.

WILLING to take care of small child, 2–5, with own of 18 mths. Norland-trained nurse. "Safe" area. Intelligent care. Very moderate terms. ANDREWS, Bridge House, Shillingford, Oxon.

FOR those who are not quite able to deal with normal life, a real home with understanding and experienced care, on psychological lines is offered in beautiful country house.—Drs. references. Box 5476.

WEEK-ENDS (with Fruitarian Cookery teaching and Health Lecture). 12s. 6d. Lady Margaret's, Doddington, Kent.

NO profiteering in portraits. ANTHONY PANTING's fees are still £2 2s. Welbeck 4950.

DETECTIVES. Divorce, private enquiries, etc. Moderate. Consultation free. UNIVERSAL DETECTIVES (Estab. 1929), 12 Henrietta Street, W.C.2. TEM. 8594.

"THE ART OF RECORD BUYING"
Few gramophone users have time to compare all available versions of the particular works they wish to add to their collection. To help them make their choice we issue a booklet, "The Art of Record Buying," which gives the best recording of over 1,000 classical works. Send 2d. in stamps for a free copy. E.M.G. HAND-MADE GRAMOPHONES, LIMITED, 11 Grape Street, London, W.C.2. TEM. 7166–7.

PERSONAL—continued

DAD got some 'baccy strange and strong,
Then rushed to change it for TOM LONG.

RESTOCK YOUR TOYS CUPBOARD at the Abbatt Toy Sale! As always in September, we are clearing out all old Toys and Furniture to make way for our Xmas Display, and offer them at prices which can certainly not be repeated. Also for September only, provided existing stocks last, new toys will be sold at their usual prices. Sale Sept. 23rd to 30th. 94 Wimpole Street, W.1.

A VACCINE by the Mouth. Secure immunity from COLDS and INFLUENZA for 4 to 6 months by taking "BUCCALINE" Brand Tablets, 5s., post free (special Children's Pack, 3s. 6d.), from the Agents, HAYMAN & FREEMAN, Chemists, 93 Piccadilly, W.1. Mayfair 4231.

HEALTH

MISS J. D. WALLINGTON (and Mrs. Helen Whitticom). Health Practitioner, Osteopath, and Bonesetter, treats all conditions of ill-health by natural methods. Consultations by appointment. 1 Ashley Place, S.W.1. Tel.: Victoria 0131; and 2 Norton Way North, Letchworth. Tel.: Letchworth 885.

MISCELLANEOUS

HAVE your favourite suit copied exactly in a "John Peel" Cumberland Tweed, £4 17s. 6d. Fit guaranteed or money refunded. Patterns and particulars post free. REDMAYNE, LTD., 10 Wigton, Cumberland.

FENCING FOR ALL PURPOSES.—Catalogue free. Ask for list ZFS.762.—PARKER, WINDER & ACHURCH, LTD., Fencing Contractors, 762 Berkley Street, Birmingham, 1. London: 7 Great Marlborough Street, W.1.

FILMS

ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford St. Ger. 2981.
BY SPECIAL LICENCE
the greatest film of our time
PROFESSOR MAMLOCK (A, London).
An unforgettable experience.

BERKELEY Cinema, Berkeley St. May. 8505
Great British Revival Programme!
Conrad Veidt and Madeleine Carroll in
I WAS A SPY (A).
Also Tom Walls in STRANGE BOARDERS (A).

EVERYMAN (opp. Hampstead Tube Stn.) Ham 2285.
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th. FOR SEVEN DAYS
ELISABETH BERGNER and MICHAEL REDGRAVE
in **STOLEN LIFE** (A)
OWN A.R.P. SHELTER IN BASEMENT.

RESTAURANTS

THERE service crowns your table, Inspiriting, urbane. Cooking most masterly rules in Maiden Lane. RULES, Maiden Lane, Covent Garden (licensed till midnight). Estd. 1780.

GREEK RESTAURANT. The White Tower, 1 Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road. Mus. 2187. For Shashliks, Pilaffs, Musakas, Stuffed Vine-leaves and all Greek and Near-Eastern Specialities.

GIVE your Sherry Party at The Book WINE RESTAURANT, facing British Museum, where you can also read "THE NEW STATESMAN" and take out a subscription. MUS. 6428.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates, and all information on page 443

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

FROZEN MARKETS — WALL STREET'S WAR BOOM — BLACK STERLING

INSTEAD of broadening out, markets on the Stock Exchange this week became narrower and more and more difficult. The root of the trouble is the gilt-edged market. The jobbers on the outbreak of war established what they called "minimum prices" below which they refused to deal. The result was the piling up on jobbers' books of a long list of sellers at the "pegged" prices who could not be accommodated. In other words, the "pegging" was ineffective from the outset and dealing in British Government stocks virtually ceased. Clearly the minima were fixed too high, and in any case without Treasury support there was little point in establishing minimum prices at all. Because dealings have become impossible in British Government stocks investors in need of cash have perforce been turning out the first-class industrial leaders in which there was still the semblance of a market. For example, General Electric were marked down from 75*s.* to 63*s.*, Shell Transport from $4\frac{17}{32}$ to $4\frac{11}{32}$. Turner and Newall from $3\frac{19}{16}$ to $3\frac{11}{16}$, Associated Portland Cement from 70*s.* to 65*s.*, Bass from 107/6 to 92/6, and so on. Gold shares, in particular the South African finance shares, also suffered from the general attempt to realise cash. I pointed out the dangers of running after equity shares while Government stocks were suffering from creeping paralysis, but jobbers seem to be hopeful that the Treasury will soon reduce Bank rate and so give some official support to the minimum prices in the gilt-edged market. If Bank rate is reduced, as it should be, the opportunity should be taken, in my view, of abolishing the ridiculous system of "pegged" prices and allowing the gilt-edged market to find its own level, which is, for the time, a few points, but not many, below the official minima.

* * *

Wall Street has been extremely erratic. The first mad upswing discounted the prospect of the neutrality legislation being so amended as to make America fat on war profiteering. The natural reaction went further than was expected, because the European war news was regarded in Wall Street as bad enough to suggest that America herself might have to participate. If Mr. Roosevelt's proposals have a quick passage through Congress, the bull market will probably be resumed. On economic grounds this should be expected. A broker's circular points out that the "consumers' goods" boom of 1936/37, in which the Dow Jones index reached 194 (against the present level of 152) was caused by the distribution of the Veterans' Bonus on top of large public works and relief expenditures. In 1939/40 additional armament orders, if the neutrality legislation is amended, should exceed the value of a Veterans' Bonus.

* * *

Towards the end of last week a "black" market for sterling developed in New York. At one time the free rate fell to $3.75, as compared with the Bank of England's official rate of $4.02-04; and, though sterling in New York recovered on Tuesday to $3.93 on a declaration by Mr. Morgenthau that steps would be taken by the American Treasury to deter speculation, it is evident that the machinery of exchange control set up in this country on the outbreak of war needs overhauling. How comes there to be an unofficial market for sterling in New York? The answer is, first, that though foreign holders (except the French) of sterling balances in London are refused foreign exchange, these balances can be sold by one neutral to another and consequently find their way to the "black" market in the United States. Secondly, persons here can remit sterling abroad by signing on Form E.1 a declaration (which their bank cannot verify) that the transaction does not transgress the exchange regulations. In these circumstances three measures should be urgently enforced. British exporters should be required to invoice all goods sold abroad in the currency of the country of destination. Secondly, no bank should be allowed to remit sterling abroad on a customer's behalf unless the customer produces an invoice from a foreign exporter proving that he has bought goods. Thirdly, foreign sterling balances should either be released completely or, preferably, blocked effectively by prohibiting their transfer from one foreign account to another. As matters stand, we are not preventing the surreptitious withdrawal of capital from Britain; we are not ensuring that all the foreign exchange accruing from exports finds its way into the Bank of England; and we have not put ourselves, as we should, in a position to curtail unnecessary imports.

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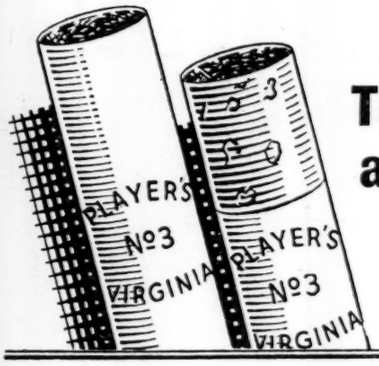

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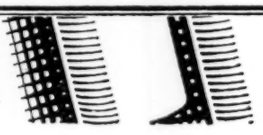

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